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A man with a mustache, wearing a white cowboy hat, a red button-down shirt, and a yellow raincoat, is riding a dark brown horse. He is looking off to the side. The background is a blurred landscape with a cloudy sky.

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This One



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TOPSPIN 6

POINT BLANK/Letters 8

FLASH

X-Clan, editors' picks, Radio Graffiti at the Grammys, John Lurie, The Clean, Dear Elvis, the Smithereens, *The Angriest Dog in the World*, G. Gordon Liddy and Timothy Leary's jail reading lists, Jello Biafra and Ice-T, Cold Rock Stuff, News, Cowboy Junkies, Talking All That Jazz. 10

VELVET MADMAN

It took the death of Andy Warhol to bring John Cale and Lou Reed back together. Songs for 'Drella—A Fiction is their first collaboration since the Velvet Underground.
By Scott Cohen 28

CHASING THE DRAGON

For bands just breaking into LA's massive rock scene, heroin has become the great legitimizer.
By Dean Kuipers 32

SOUL TO SELL

Fab Five Freddie of "Yo! MTV Raps," on Soul II Soul's rise to power, Jazzie B's groove and building the black nation.
By Fab Five Freddie and Frank Owen 38

SPIN FASHION

High-octane looks for a hot summer. 44

FOOL'S GOLD

The Stone Roses have taken Britain's pop world by storm, and on their own terms.
By James Brown 56

ANTIHERO

Crack, crime, family abandonment—social problems painted black by the racist media. How to fight the power and get out the truth.
By Ishmael Reed 59

MOVING IMAGES

John Waters's "Cry-Baby," "The Tall Guy," "The Handmaid's Tale," Video Rewind. 64

AIDS

Potentially lifesaving and inexpensive treatments are being passed over by a burgeoning "AIDS Multinational," as thousands of people with AIDS pay the ultimate price to keep the \$5 billion research establishment going.
By Jon Rappoport 68

SPINS/Records 73

UNDERGROUND 82

SINGLES 84

WORLD BEAT! 86

UNCLASSIFIEDS

Lee Atwater's Rock'n'Roll Diary, The King and the Godfather, Rock'n'Roll Fable, Jamie's corner.
Satire by Ben Metcalf and D.J. Samuels 88

CLASSIFIEDS 90

REPORTER UNCOVERS SINISTER PANAMA-NORIEGA AXIS

Were Noriega and King Olav V partners in an International Herring and Creamer Cartel? Judge for yourself.
By Dean Christopher 98

TOP SPIN

Like the intellectual syphilis that it is, the censorship of music issue has risen again. In Alexander City, Alabama, a 48-year-old man stood trial in a Kafkaesque proceeding, for selling a 2 Live Crew tape, his life, without sane reason, suddenly wrenched from its rails and made the object of a national experiment. Like K. in *The Trial*, Tommy Hammond's privacy and routine were dissolved as society decided what to do with him, although he had committed no crime. He was eventually acquitted on appeal and the nightmare itself dissolved. Had he not been he would've been the first felon convicted for selling music, and the nightmare would've escaped the tiny jar of an ultra-conservative Southern town and begun to engulf the rest of the country.

Hammond's acquittal is a personal and solitary vindication, and the music industry—and you and I—cannot dwell long on its relief. In Missouri, State Legislator Jean Dixon is, at press time, still trying to have passed into State Law House Bill 1406, "An act, relating to certain performances, with penalty provisions." Sounds Orwellian doesn't it? It would sound more appropriate if it related to child abuse or drug trafficking, but the punishment is intended for people who don't sticker recordings deemed offensive. The act seeks to label records that contain lyrics pertaining to—well, just about everything from nudity to Satanism, which I guess is a pretty wide spectrum by anyone's definition.

Five years ago, at the infamous Senate "Pom-rock" hearings (a television event more absurd and theatrical than anything even MTV has ever dreamed up), Frank Zappa and Dee Snyder debated Tipper Gore, Susan Baker and the rest of the Parents Music Resource Center in front of their Senator husbands, who were holding the hearings, about the need to protect freedom of musical expression. Zappa, and the rest of us who rushed to editorialize about the insidious evolution of censorship, warned that the conservatives would one day

attempt to take the debate beyond voluntary labelling, and make expression they don't like illegal. If the Missouri bill becomes law, 15 other states will automatically adopt the identical legislation, and a reported eight more will draft such bills immediately. That means that Jean Dixon's desire to control musical expression, in the name of some imagined public good, will annex half of the states of the union to this conservative fantasy.

The objection to record labelling is not merely artistic petulance, childish foot stomping, as it is more or less characterized. The mandatory label, if it comes to pass, will be a stigma that will control the commercial destiny—and therefore reach—of a record. The label is like the iron ball and chain 19th century convicts had attached to their ankles, or the unremovable metal bracelets that enslave the Handmaidens in the futuristic movie "The Handmaid's Tale." The label is a device for control.

Artists are the conscience of a society, which is why they've been persecuted throughout history. Artists articulate the truth, in varying degrees of clarity. It's the truth about life in the ghetto, the realistic portrayal of the indifference towards human life or sexuality in a rap song that offends the priggish, mostly white, mostly middle-class sensibility of this country. What shocks is not the isolated words—all of which can be found in the literature of Miller, Lawrence and Joyce, for instance—but their stimulation of our collective guilt. In that sense, even the most offensive, tasteless depiction of sexism or racism, or even drug glorification, is important because it leaves the way open for a more sensitive, skilled poet to describe and make us understand society's ills and anguishes. Because, in the end we can survive the ugliness of Ice-T and his flashlight/penis compensation and Axl Rose's pathetic homophobia, but we can't survive suffocating free expression.

In the legend of the first storyteller,



Bulch Belair



Joshua Cheuse

Left: Hot cars and hot fashion (44); Right: At Western Studios in Hollywood: hanging on the smack frontier (32).

the primitive tribe sat around the campfire at night and members told of their exploits that day. One night, one man who had done something particularly heroic, rose to describe it, couldn't, and sat down, whereupon another got up and, in powerfully evocative language, explained what the first man had done. When he was finished, the rest of the tribe were so emotionally moved that they took the storyteller into the bushes and killed him. They were afraid he could use his eloquence to betray them to their enemies. Since the beginning of civilization people without vision have been scared of words.

It's ironic that as we applaud Eastern

Europe for throwing off the 40-year-old shackles of repression, we're pretending we don't hear the soul-chilling clank of the same shackles being dragged out of the same sort of closet in Missouri and Birmingham and Washington, DC. The issue of censorship in music is far more serious than the self-righteous rhetoric makes it appear. It's an important fight for you to be aware of and, if possible, join by writing to your Senator and Congressman, letting them know you expect them to protect all your freedoms, even those that make some people squeamish sometimes.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

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POINT LETTERS BLANK

Race against Racism

Thank you for the intelligent interview with Chuck D. ["Public Service," March] I am a 28-year-old, mixed-race female (mother, white; father, black). While I have experienced a lot of prejudice in my life, both from black and white people, the most painful slurs have come from white people. Blacks seem just to remain aloof to me, while whites seem determined to de-white me.

My husband (who is white) and I are expecting a child this year, and I hope I can teach her the most important thing I've learned: that she'll not be part-this/part-that, but all human, all races, totally loved.

Too bad ignorance isn't painful.

Kimberly Green Devine
Annapolis, MD

Maybe some of the hardships Chuck D. and his fellows have experienced would have been lessened if they paid more attention in school so they wouldn't have to respond to questions by saying "brothers be like. . ."

A. Ian Romanov
San Leandro, CA

Chuck D. can deny that Public Enemy are anti-Semitic until he is blue in the face, but I don't believe him for one second.

Debbie Lom
New Fairfield, CT

So is 3rd Bass gonna call their next album *Fear of a Jewish-Homo Planet?*

N. Berry
Ridgewood, NJ

Anarchy Phreaking

Your article about the cyber underground ["Cyber Thrash," March] gave a good, general idea of what it is about, without giving away too much. Hacking and phreaking are a service to the community: as the military-industrial complex collapses, why not help it?

Across the world, the mainstream is afraid of three things: minority rights, free thought and the technological revolution. The government can't even trust its own hackers or scientists, because anybody can access the system.

Count Zero
Long Island, New York

Rainbow Coalition

I'm standing on a hill watching a couple of hundred kids jumping up and down in unison. They're black and white and yellow and preppy and punk and 13 and 30, all smiling and screaming and hugging each other in a tangled rainbow of humanity. A Red Hot Chili Peppers ["Physical Graffiti," February] show can be so damn beautiful, you just want to sit on a hill and cry, but you can't 'cuz your body wants to dance too much.

Dave Phillips
Richmond, VA

I had one problem with your article on the Red Hot Chili Peppers: it promoted the stereotypical image of Southerners as uneducated, unsophisticated, racist slime. Having grown up in Richmond, Virginia, I am all too familiar with both overt and covert racism in the South. What I have a problem with is the promotion of stereotypes. Sure, some—maybe even most—Southerners are ignorant, uneducated, conformist, racist scum. However, there are some of us who want racial, sexual and social equality. Remember, it was, after all, Virginia—not California, New York or New Jersey—that elected the first black governor.

Rickey Puckett
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD

Acceptable Scapegoat

Thanks for William S. Burroughs [Anti-hero, February]. It's time we woke up and realized that prohibition does not, and has never worked. It only leads to a situation in which human rights and civil liberties are violated. As the so-called "Communist threat" recedes from the public mind, the politicians and the media, and therefore the public, will turn increasingly to their only socially acceptable scapegoat—the drug user.

Ron Tenbrink
Vancouver, BC

After reading Miles Davis on Charlie Parker (January) and Chet Baker (February), I was wondering if "drug habits of dead jazz greats" is going to be a monthly feature.

John McCarthy
Carbondale, PA

Freedom Schlock

This afternoon I had the opportunity to speak with your Circulation Director concerning my proposal to use Freedom Rocks [pieces of the Berlin Wall] as a premium to stimulate subscription response to SPIN.

His objection was that the Freedom Rock concept was not "hip," to use his word. There is nothing more "hip" in pop culture today than the Berlin Wall with all of its symbolism and ramifications.

And if it's not "hip," then why in the February, 1990, issue of your magazine did you publish a report called "So You Want a Revolution?" Based on that conversation, I am afraid this valid, cutting-edge concept which your magazine can profit from will not get a fair hearing.

My concern is that these concepts are "too lofty" or "over the head" of your Circulation Director. Do you realize what kind of a response you would generate if you offered a free piece of the Berlin Wall to new subscribers? And it comes to you as a quality piece for less than the price of a T-shirt.

Please reconsider my proposal.

Gary Suo
Freedom Rocks
Toronto, Ontario

Gathering No More Moss

I get my *Rolling Stone* (a gift subscription from my grandmother), and it's got Billy Joel on the cover. Disgusted, I purchase the February issue of SPIN. Thank you.

Michelle Dupre
New Orleans, LA

Dissing Us

Get some balls and put Jane Siberry on your cover. SPIN is a predictable pile of market research—you guys are spineless, bought-off, trendy and just as faceless and corporate as McDonalds.

Bob Dylan has songs about people like you.

R. Jollimore
Trenton, NJ





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FLASH

Edited by Frank Owen

FUNKY PHARAOHS

With their bizarre costumes, elaborate personal mythology, and inventive musical imagination, X-Clan could well be the hip hop group of the future. Numerology, Egyptology and Bullshitology.

With their jeweled necklaces, elaborate ear, hand and nose rings, the members of the rap group X-Clan are dressed for any occasion or any millennium. Brother J is wearing a Biblical sheepskin (okay, so it's suede) cloak; Professor X wears head-to-toe black leather. To the East, Blackwards, their debut album, is a consciousness-raising trip uniting black cultures from the pyramids to Brooklyn to outer space.

The latest in black nationalist rap, X-Clan mixes philosophy and Clinton mothership funk with a waggish playfulness. How seriously can you take their claim to be "millions of years old"? "It is the experience of millions of years," says Brother J solemnly. Professor X rights himself with his polished stone staff and continues, "When me and Isaac and Mohammed hung out..."

Already X-Clan's first single, "Raise the Flag," a funky call for knowledge and unity, has become a hit in England, and its term "sissee" (another word for "sucker") has become instant street slang. Composed of MC Brother J, DJ Sugar Shack and Paradise, X-Clan fall under the umbrella group of Blackwatch, a Brooklyn-based activist organization led by Professor X, or Lumumba Carson, son of renowned politico Sonny Carson and X-Clan's manager and overseer.

"In Blackwatch, music is just one of our vehicles," says Paradise. "We are strugglers who participate in the movement 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. X-Clan doesn't end at record shops. We are out in the street, whether organizing protests at kids being shot down by the police or registering people to vote. We don't like the word political. When Yusef Hawkins was shot, they didn't ask him whether he was Democrat or Republican, Muslim or Hebrew. Blackwatch is about the united nations of all black people."

"This isn't anything cosmic," says Professor X, keen to disavow any notion that the band's zany image undermines the seriousness of their mission. "In our video for 'Earthbound,' a spaceship lands and the principals get into a pink Cadillac. We understand all areas of our existence, and we're comfortable. Because we are in touch with our genes, we understand the usage of the rhythm of that funky old drum, in the 1990s going into the 21st century."

"We call our music vanglorious, not rap," says Brother J, "not to separate it, but to note the difference. We are not entertainers. Vanglorious means the coming of the gods' new drum. Back in Africa we communicate with the drum. We move on through generations, but we beat to a new drum, a futuristic drum. It's influenced by the past, of course. My great, great, great, great grandmother and grandfather beat on the drum, and now I beat on it in the studio."

"We need to recreate the whole structure of who we are," continues Brother J. "We've lived here so long, and we've been brainwashed. We may have to rebuild the pyramid back again, continuing in faith from all Pharaohs to Malcolm X to Martin Luther King to Adam Clayton Powell."

—Jill Pearlman

HEAVY ROTATION



Staff Selections

The Church *Gold Afternoon Fix* (Arista) Further mystical musings from the tried-and-true kingpins of ethereal pop. Well worth the two-year wait since the almost-but-not-quite-gold *Starfish*, these cuts strike an even deeper vein, mining the most satisfying and cohesive effort since the band's very earliest crusades. (Blackwell)

The Pursuit of Happiness *One Sided Story* (Chrysalis) Fresh from their Canadian kitchen comes this second batch of sour rock candy that leaves a sugar sweet taste in your mouth. With a little more musical diversity than their debut *Love Junk* and the same razor-sharp lyrics, these guys are fast proving themselves *The Archies* of the real world. (Blackwell)

Nitzer Ebb *Showtime* (Geffen) Welcome to the hate machine. Nitzer's brand of industrial dance pop may be a bit much in uninterrupted doses; but when judiciously applied, pummeling can be fun. Producer Flood throws in enough funny noises to keep things interesting. (Greer)

Various Artists *Every Band Has a Shonen Knife* (Giant) Shonen Knife, three girls from Japan whose loopy garage-pop sensibility earned them an avid if tiny cult following, get the underground all-star tribute treatment. As usual with these projects, not everything here is worthy of the Knife. But the good stuff—contributions by Christmas, Big Dipper, and Sonic Youth, for instance—more than compensates for the dross. (Greer)

X-Clan *To The East, Blackwards* (4th & Broadway) From the tribes of Israel to the posses of Brooklyn, and from the talking drum to the digital drum, X-Clan know that black history is a concept to be played with as much as a story to be told. Serious beats, half-humorous raps and funky concepts combine to make *To The East, Blackwards* the hip hop debut of the season. (Owen)

Lisa Stansfield *Affection* (Arista) If *De La Soul* is hip hop for people who don't like rap music, then Lisa Stansfield is soul music for people who don't like R&B. Seamless, user-friendly and perfectly executed, Stansfield exudes the aura of someone destined for major stardom. This year's *Faith*. (Owen)

FLASH

RADIO GRAFITTI SPECIAL

Once again—it's the east coast's Legend of graffiti'n'talk show host No one ever dares cum close! To Ambassador Bönz, The Phantom Ghost. Radio Graffiti Live at the Grammys (or should I say Shammys?)

Kap'n's log. Star date, the 21st of February. I stepped into the venue 'bout 4:35 p.m. Wednesday afternoon tuh' pick up my backstage credentialz. Done! Now I'm plugged into the Academy as a member of the general press, but ain't nuthin' general 'bout me. Jack! I'm loungin' in a black suit, silk shirt n' tie & a fly pair of trainerz. I'm ready to thump. I take my seat strategically jus' in case I gotta let one off in the crowd n' dash. Aftuh the openin' song by Billy Joel, an award went to Michael Bolton (Best Pop Vocal Male) who wouldn't shut up whin givin' the credits. The glamor & hype of the whole thing had me sick, so I got me a Fatburger & chilled until the award for Best New Artist wuz up. Yo. It's Neneh Cherry, Indigo Girls, Milli Vanilli, Tone Loc n' Soul II Soul. "And the winner iz—Milli Vanilli!" That's bullshankz! How could they beat Soul II Soul in that category when the Funky Dreds had a better LP?

Above: Gleeeful pixies Milli Vanilli after receipt of Grammy, but prior to being hum rushed by SPIN correspondent. Below: Young MC B.A.—the acceptable face of hip hop.



Steve Grantz/Reina Ltd

They grabbed there tampon n' leaped off the stage like glee pixies. I couldn't wait tuh kick their a.m. (anal meat) so I housed the myk & said, "You look happy for a couple who jus' bought an award, which wuz a public embarrassment fuh' yoo tuh receive. I feel yoo got laid by NARAS & now it's time fuh dem tuh' pay the chekq. Ya'll ain't win jak. Ya'll don't deserve tuh win!"

Az I turned to step, one uv dem said, "Well that's your opinion. I don't give a—" I slowly turned around.

"What! What did yoo say?!" "You heard what I said."

Yo & % dat! I'm packin' heavy. Got six deep in my jeep & yoo wanna riff? Let's get it on.

This plase iz strictly Audiz, Jaguarz, Mercedes, Limoz, & Lamburgez. Everyone's heer tonyte—tha' best of the west & la crem de la phlegmi This ain't my game. Like Paul McCartney said, "I don't like synthetic muzik." Word tuh the nerd & almost all deez people are down wit' NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences) who's prezident iz Mike Greene. These boyz called the shots, don't believe that ya'll got Gucci at the door. In othuh' wordz, the richer yor record label iz, the betta the chancez of gettin a Jammy. Dick Clark, the ageless grooie, even won an award for hiz contributionz to the Academy. He shouldn't get shit! The Dick is so greazy. But wha'd yoo

xpect, he runz the American Muzik Awards & in this script it's each one, suck one, right Dick?

Finally, we get to the category of best rap performance. All day I've been thinkin' of stinkin' beatz n' breakz. Three groopz from back East iz up tuh rok da spot: De La Soul, Jeff n' the Fresh Prince, N' Public Enemy. "And the winner iz—Young MC!" Wha the hell iz goin' on, geez?! The goof waltzed on stage n' jus' murph'd a Grammy. Yeah, the Shammyz taut me yoo kin really go far wit'—no, not talent—a college degree.

Mahn, I can't take it no more—I'm outta here! Tha best thing I heard all dae iz Paul McCartney saying, "I like all sortz of music: Eric B. & Rakim, Public Enemy..." Good one.

Dat night aftuh the awardz, the whole town wuz foam'n'. Party ovuh here. Party ovuh there—yo baby yoi! Frum Warner Bros. to Arista to Jive to the Zulu Nation, Beverly Hills, Sunset Strip, Malibu, Vine St., Caesar's Palace, n' of course, Disneyland! Yo, the girlz were fly like dovs n' they juz love Radio Graffiti. Well, I guess this iz it. My last night in L.A. Ya know, I've always popped alotta game 'bout Planet Janet (Los Angeles) but thanx for thuh' memories ya'll. Tomorrow I'll tell ya about Yvanita who invited me over for shrimp n' sangria... Get the idea? See ya!

—Bönz Malone

Steve Grantz/Reina Ltd



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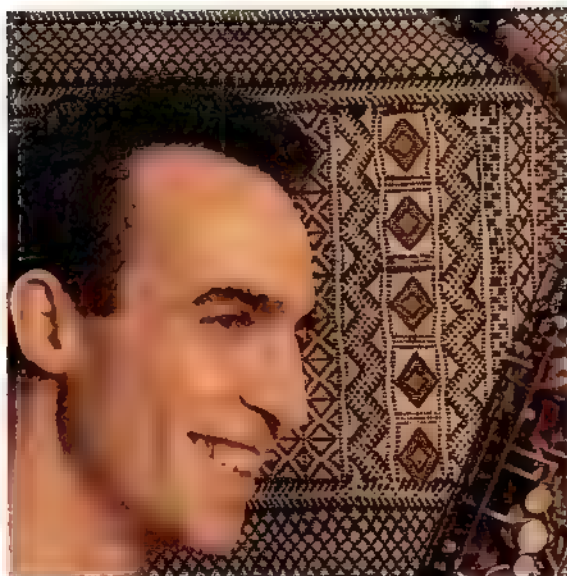
CHARMED LIFE TOUR

COMING SUMMER 1990

Chrysalis

Late Night Lurie

Without a major record contract, but with a major attitude, **John Lurie** and the **Lounge Lizards** set out to conquer America using TV.



John Lurie's reclining on what appears to be one of those Craftmatic beds you see advertised on late-night TV. He's in his pajamas and robe; and, holding his horn as he is, he looks like one of the sidemen in the Duke Ellington Band of the 30s during

a break. The bed goes with a dream he'd like to be in: "I'm standing in a field surrounded by rabbits, except the rabbits have frog legs. Then Michelle Pfeiffer comes up to me and asks if I have change for a dollar. I say, 'I'm sorry. I only have 85 cents.' " Also in bed with him, among other things, is a phone he wishes would ring.

"Hello, I'm John Lurie," he says, "and I want to tell you that now you can listen to the very strange and very beautiful music of the Lounge Lizards here in America, just like people in other lands. To order, call toll free 1-800-44-CHUNK." Then the camera cuts to several beautiful women of other lands in what is a surreal version of the "Lonely? Call 1-900-LOVE" ads on cable. It's John's best performance since he costarred in Jim Jarmusch's film, "Down By Law."

John and his band are big stars in Europe, Japan and other lands, but for some reason no American record company would sign them, which is why John paid for the new Lounge Lizards' album, *Voice of Chunk*, as well as for the TV spot, himself. It's too bad, because the Lounge Lizards, who play a kind of jazz rock without being fusion, are really original. Their earliest records are highly kinetic, textural and very artistic, like a Jackson Pollack painting. "My music now is more toned down," he says, "and sounds like a Paul Klee. But more than paintings, my music goes with certain Moroccan rugs and African tapestries. It has an ethnic world music feel to it."

—Scott Cohen

Shepherd Rock

NEW ZEALAND IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A ROCK'N'ROLL RENAISSANCE AND **THE CLEAN** ARE THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THIS NEW KIWIPOP.

New Zealand is yin to Australia's yang, a nuclear-free zone that boasts green hills, the fuzzy, melodic pop of Flying Nun (New Zealand's premier indie label) records and sheep. Lots of sheep. "Yes, I've had quite a lot of interaction with sheep," admits Robert Scott, bass player and singer for the Clean, perhaps New Zealand's greatest band. Singer/

guitarist David Kilgour and brother/drummer Hamish Kilgour also fess to spending their youth in the fast lane of New Zealand farming. "You watch sheep die, watch sheep live," says Hamish. "You watch sheep watch you," David adds.

Though the Chills are the most famous band to arise out of Flying Nun's constantly shifting roster of musicians, the founding fathers of Kiwipop are the Clean. Their 81 single "Tally Ho!" (which also featured the Chills' Martin Phillipps) was Flying Nun's first single and got the label on the runway. The Clean put out

a couple of EPs' worth of wonderful songs that mixed warm, frail melodies with thick, organic guitar and sprinkles of cheesy organ. Fans gasped when they suddenly disbanded in 82. "I hated the whole celebrity showbiz thing," David explains. "I felt like a holiday from it, and the easiest way to have a holiday was to spit it." They continued in other projects—the Bats, the Great UnWashed, Baiter Space—but last year, in a typically casual manner, they reunited. "We all just happened to be in London. It was something to do, and we did it and we enjoyed it."

Live, the Clean are as spontaneous as their career, and last summer's tour gave concert goers a glimpse of pop Arcadia. "We like to play real open-ended," says David. "We're not tight at all. We like looseness." Along with an excellent Clean compilation LP, the tour whetted appetites for new material, and now their new *Vehicles* delivers a mother lode of pop gems like "Dunes," "Diamond" and "Drawing to a Whole." And why does this music sound so warm and refreshing? "We live in high population places there's more aggression and pressure

and that comes out in the band," suggests Robert. "Whereas in New Zealand everything's more relaxed so the people writing the music are a bit mellow."

Or maybe the Clean have just found the ideal combination of pop and folk music. Shepherd rock in an age of wolves.

—Enk Davis

Since the start of the column, Elvis has been besieged with letters. We select some, gather 'round the Elvis board and wait for his response. If you have a question for Elvis, send it to SPIN, 6 W 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Please keep it short. Elvis is still a busy man.

Dear Elvis



Who do you think the members of the Residents are? Here's my list, then you give me yours. Joe South, Bobby Goidsboro, Dale Hawkins, Little Anthony, Sandie Shaw, Mungo Jerry, Best Wishes, Dennis C. Barlow, Catatonic Park, NY

Hey, I know why you're asking. You want me to respond to the Residents' new LP *The King and I*, which makes references to the fact that my becoming the King of rock'n'roll wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Hey, fuck the Residents, those anonymous bum suckers, maybe it wasn't all a bed of roses, but they'll never know. Being the King of rock'n'roll was a tough job, but hey, somebody had to do it. And I gave it my best.

Love,

Elvis

P.S. I think the Residents are really the castaways of Gilligan's island.



AMERICA'S POP HERO.



TASTES GREAT.



The surprise of the season is
The Smithereens crossing over
 into the pop charts.
"The Arsenio Hall Show" awaits.

ARSENIO HELL

called it Smithereens 2 twice in a row. "Well, they're not heavy metal," says one of the studio dudes sitting in the audience section. "Oh, no," says his companion. "This song is Top 40, man!"

Well, actually Top 44, which is the number "A Girl Like You" hit on this particular day. Not bad for a bunch of guys past the age of 30 who never had any intention of making it this far in the first place.

Finally, it's showtime. Arsenio introduces the band and gets the Smithereens 11 part right. A curtain rises, and the Smithereens perform "A Girl Like You." There's something sterile, but also

something very rock'n'roll about the whole proceeding. Arsenio shakes their hands, the first and only time they meet him.

Next up is Gary Coleman, the kid who played Arnold on TV and still looks the same at the age of 21. He wants to discuss the lawsuit his mother filed against him, and what the Nationa Enquirer has done with the story. Meanwhile, the Smithereens are getting ready to do an in-store appearance at Tower Records across town. Roseanne Barr is probably still fretting about those love letters. It's a typical evening in Hollywood.

—Bill Holdship

It's a typical afternoon in Hollywood. Roseanne Barr has taken out ads in all the trade papers, offering a reward for the return of her stolen love letters. The street buzz is that Kevin Costner's new film is a real dog. And the Smithereens are on soundstage 32 of the Paramount Studios lot, getting ready to do a soundcheck for their appearance on this evening's Arsenio Hall

show. They all look just a tad out of place, unkempt in their black T-shirts and black jeans.

Guitarist Jim Babjak and bassist Mike Mesaros have finally gotten the sound they're looking for—this, of course, being a band that rose to fame playing pop Rickenbacker guitars through loud Marshall amps—and they're ready to run through their current hit single, "A Girl Like You." Lead singer and

primary songwriter Pat DiNizio strums power chords and looks like a man possessed. There's a discussion after the song between the band and Arsenio's staff. "But I don't want to cut the intro short!" DiNizio says loudly. "It's the hook of the song!"

The new album is called Smithereens 11, but the guy reading the words that Arsenio will use to introduce the band has

dialogue to David Hwang, the art director at the Reader. Hwang draws in the words on a piece of wax paper placed over an enlargement of the strip, doing his best to approximate Lynch's original handwriting.

Why does Lynch, an acclaimed filmmaker, a painter and now the director of the television program *Twin Peaks*, bother with making up dialogue for a weekly comic strip?

"You come up with this kind of thing because someone is waiting for it. When you have to do it every week, you think of ideas that wouldn't enter your head otherwise."

Some people seem to wish that Lynch's ideas and his strip would stay in his head and out of the newspapers. In last year's readers survey, 20% of the people said Lynch's strip was what they liked least about the

New York Press. And in 1985, Jeff Murray, who produces the alternative comic strip *USA Today*, drew a parody piece mocking "The Laziest Cartoonist in the World."

"Just barely able to write a bit of predictable dialogue, he approaches a state of utter stasis," reads the cartoon, which shows a dog asleep in front of an easel. Lynch reacts, "That's pretty good. He's getting close to some anger there."

In the mid-'80s, however, Baltimore's *City Paper* asked readers to call in and say whether they wanted *Angriest Dog* dead or alive. They received 600 calls with five to one pro-dog.

Whether it is prized or despised, *The Angriest Dog* in the *World* stays unque, because it remains unfettered. The comic has never grown or developed. Instead, says Lynch, "it's stayed in a bitter confused torment a throughout."

Angriest Dog appears every week in the *Los Angeles Reader*, the *New York Press*, and in Seattle's *Westward*.

David Snyder

Canine Cult

Both loved and loathed, ***The Angriest Dog in the World*** is a bizarre weekly cartoon created by renowned film auteur David Lynch. Anger has never been so intense.

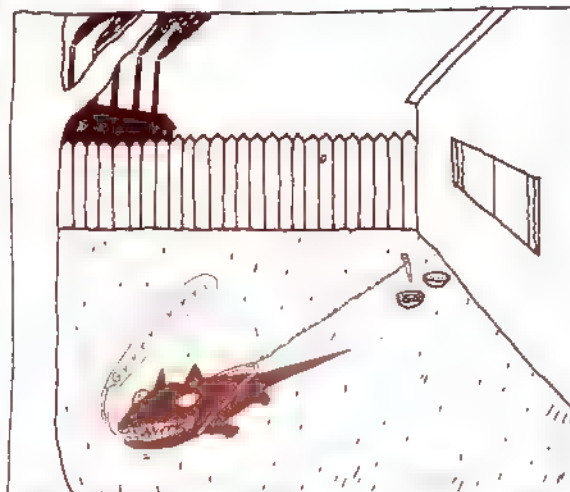
Strange, obscure and tense, tense tense—*The Angriest Dog in the World* is a comic strip produced by acclaimed psycho filmmaker David Lynch. Portraying the kind of relentless rage which, day or night, remains undiminished, the strip features a "dog who is so angry he cannot move," art that never changes and sensibly senseless dialogue like "A mirror is a high y reflective surface" and "Cheese

is made from milk."

But the strip isn't just about this enraged hound. "I don't know why I chose a dog," Lynch explains. "It has more to do with people and the idea that anger is so intense."

Lynch came up with the idea for the cartoon during the early '70s while working on "Eraserhead." "I drew just the tree and the dog. I got the idea that nothing would change pictorially. I liked the idea that nothing would change," Lynch says.

Lynch called many papers to see if they would be interested in running the strip, until James Zowell, publisher of the *Los Angeles Reader*, said he was. Lynch drew the strip once and sent it to the alternative weekly. Today, either he or his assistant, Debbie Trutnik, call in the





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☐ H.S. Graduate ☐ College Graduate

Prior Military Service: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Branch _____

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Americans At Their Best.

The G. Gordon Liddy and Timothy Leary Recommended Prison Reading List—Or What They Read On Rainy Afternoons in the Joint

BOOKS BEHIND BARS

G. GORDON LIDDY

(Served time for Contempt of Congress)

Note: Most of this stuff I read in prison when I had more time to kill. Now I mostly read nonfiction.



- 1 **Dune** by Frank Herbert—Epic fantasy marked by creative consistency, mysticism and adventure
- 2 **Sian** by A.E. Van Vogt—A human tale in which human insights are revealed through the perceptions of non-humans.
- 3 **Out of Control** by G. Gordon Liddy—A spy thriller which realistically portrays the intellect and spirit of woman, but then I'm prejudiced. I wrote it.
- 4 **The Light That Failed** by Rudyard Kipling—Kipling was a man at one with his time.
- 5 **Atlas Shrugged** by Ayn Rand—Rand writes without illusion.
- 6 **Arc de Triomphe** by Erich Maria Remarque—The real triumph was that of a human spirit in the time of darkness.
- 7 **Idylls of the King** by Alfred Lord Tennyson (from *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory)—See *Dune*, but in this world at another time and in poetry.
- 8 **The Big Sleep** by Raymond Chandler—Chandler knew the human condition and could find and depict honor among shades of gray.
- 9 **God is an Englishman** by R.H. Delderfield—A marriage of venture capitalism and romance which works splendidly.
- 10 **Catcher in the Rye** by J.D. Salinger—Everyman was first Everyboy.

TIMOTHY LEARY

(Served time for drug charges)

Note: Tim's list is a little shorter because he didn't have to wait for a Presidential Pardon as G. Gordon did—the Weathermen busted him out of a California prison.

- 1 **Divine Comedy** by Dante—Encyclopedic epic which summarizes the worldview of the Middle Ages, written by an exile in praise of women.
- 2 **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** by Mark Twain—The rowdy, comic, irreverent American Bible about the trip down the river of life by two young outlaws engaged in a criminal caper to free a slave.
- 3 **Ulysses** by James Joyce—This is the most important book in the English language. It did for language what Einstein did for physics. Relativistic, evolutionary and ultimately funny.
- 4 **Gravity's Rainbow** by Thomas Pynchon—The great American writer of the 20th century has written a classic comic psychological encyclopedia.
- 5 **Cat's Cradle** by Kurt Vonnegut—Best book by a wonderful witty philosopher.
- 6 **Childhood's End** by Arthur C. Clarke—An amazing prophecy about higher intelligence and a baby boom generation leading the planet to mutate into the future.

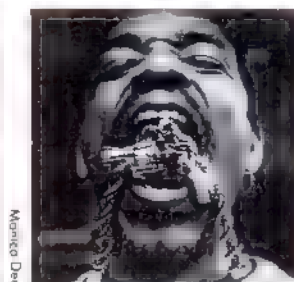


- 7 **Changing My Mind, Among Others** by Timothy Leary—Collected life writings selected and introduced by the author. A scientific philosophy of human evolution.
- 8 **2080** by Gerard O'Neill—The architect of space migration describes how our species will move into the higher front.

—Legs McNeil

Hardcore Duo

We have long been fascinated with the eerie similarities between the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln. Now, new research has uncovered still more eerie similarities between a guy who is an ex-Dead Kennedy and another guy who's stolen a few Lincoln Continentals.



Jello Biafra and Ice-T have a lot in common. Both are responsible for the development of California hardcore music—Jello hardcore punk, and Ice-T hardcore rap. Both took their cues from eastern imports—Jello from London and Ice-T from the Bronx. Now both are on Ice-T's new album, *The Iceberg/Freedom of Speech... Just Watch What You Say*—Jello's voice is sampled on two tracks, "Shut Up, Be Happy" and the title track. Ice-T is into Black Flag and the Circle Jerks while Jello's real name is Eric B. Don't bother calling your astrologer: we've compiled all of the similarities right here.

Jello Biafra

Real name is Eric Boucher (Boucher is French for "mouth")

31 years old

Lives in San Francisco and Ukiah, CA

Wrote the song "Too Drunk To Fuck"

New project, called Lard, is a band that includes members of Ministry

Owens his own record label

Alternative Tentacles' offices next door to Joyce Brothers's Metal Works

Appeared in two movies, "Tapeheads" and "Terminal City Ricochet"

Almost went to prison for "Distribution of harmful matters to minors"

Probably hates Tipper Gore

To make Jello: Just add water

Ice-T

Will only say that he once used the alias "Jeffrey Frazier" one of the times he was arrested

Will only say he is older than 12 and younger than 65

Lives in Hollywood, CA

Wrote the song "Girls, Let's Get Butt Naked And Fuck"

New project, called Syndicate Industries, is buying the rights to old Blaxploitation movies

Co-owns his own record label

Sire Records' offices next door to Burbank Studios, home of TV shows "Head of the Class" and "Murphy Brown"

Appeared in two movies, "Breakin' 1" and "Breakin' 11"

Almost went to prison for robbery, credit card fraud and insurance scams—"Nothing to do with drugs"

Probably hates Tipper Gore

To make Ice-T: Just add water

—Lance Gould

Chris Buck

Paul Horns/Outline

Neal Preston/Outline

Living Colour

Kate Bush

Big Audio Dynamite

Indigo Girls

The Psychedelic Furs

Shawn Colvin

Poi Dog Pondering

Public Enemy

The Rave-Ups

Nuclear Valdez

Social Distortion

3rd Bass

O-Positive

Big Dipper

Toad The Wet Sprocket

Prong



THE

COLD
ROCK

STUFF

These are a few of our favorite things.



Austrian Museum

ROCK'N'ROLL PAINTERS

Since Andy Warhol redefined the 20th century painter as a rock star, rock stars have been redefining themselves as painters. Captain Beefheart gave up music entirely for painting, and Yoko Ono put John Lennon's doodles, calligraphy and erotica on display at her Bag One gallery in New York. John Mellencamp, six months into his life as a painter, denounced pop art as a fraud and art school as a place where you paint dicks all day. Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Donna Summer, Grant Hart and Ron Wood are all accomplished painters; indeed Wood has recently opened his own art gallery, Woody's, in New York's East Village.

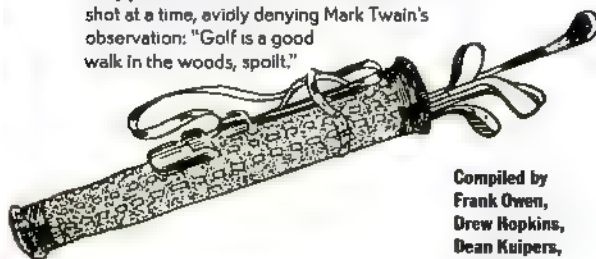
SAN-DIN-ISTA

COMMUNIST COLLECTIBLES

Whether you were turned on by a workers' utopia, enjoyed supporting America's mortal enemy or simply envied a more effective police state, Soviet Chic has gone from fashion accessory to anachronistic collectible. Czechoslovakia's selling off Lenin statues. East Germany's laying claim to profits from the sale of their Wall. While in Nicaragua the new president is dealing with mountains of Sandinista T-shirts. For specific product information, consult the back pages of *The Nation*.

GOLF

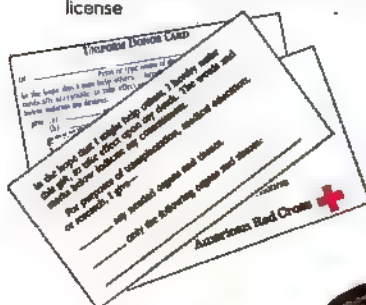
No one denies the masochistic tendencies of Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper, but few are aware of their current predilection for flailing away at golf balls. These two notable golfers are not alone in their pursuit of the perfect swing plane. At least one ex-Ramone, one current US Vice President and two *Spin* staffers openly admit their addiction. They join 23.4 million Americans who take it one shot at a time, avidly denying Mark Twain's observation: "Golf is a good walk in the woods, spoilt."



Compiled by
Frank Owen,
Drew Hopkins,
Dean Kuipers,
John Leland,
Mark Weinberg
and Nathaniel Wice

ORGAN DONOR CARDS

So you're rock'n'roll, dedicated to headbanging, stage diving, drag racing with the lights off and consummate substance abuse. Well, at least do one good thing with your body: sign and carry an Organ Donor Card. Make sure your beautiful corpse goes to one of the thousands of Americans dying for a working piece of you. Our friend Dallas Taylor, ex-drummer for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, needs a liver so bad that he carries a message beeper to tell him when some lover of life has died with the card in his wallet. Call your local chapter of the American Red Cross, your State Transplantation Program or simply fill out the donor information on the back of your driver's license.



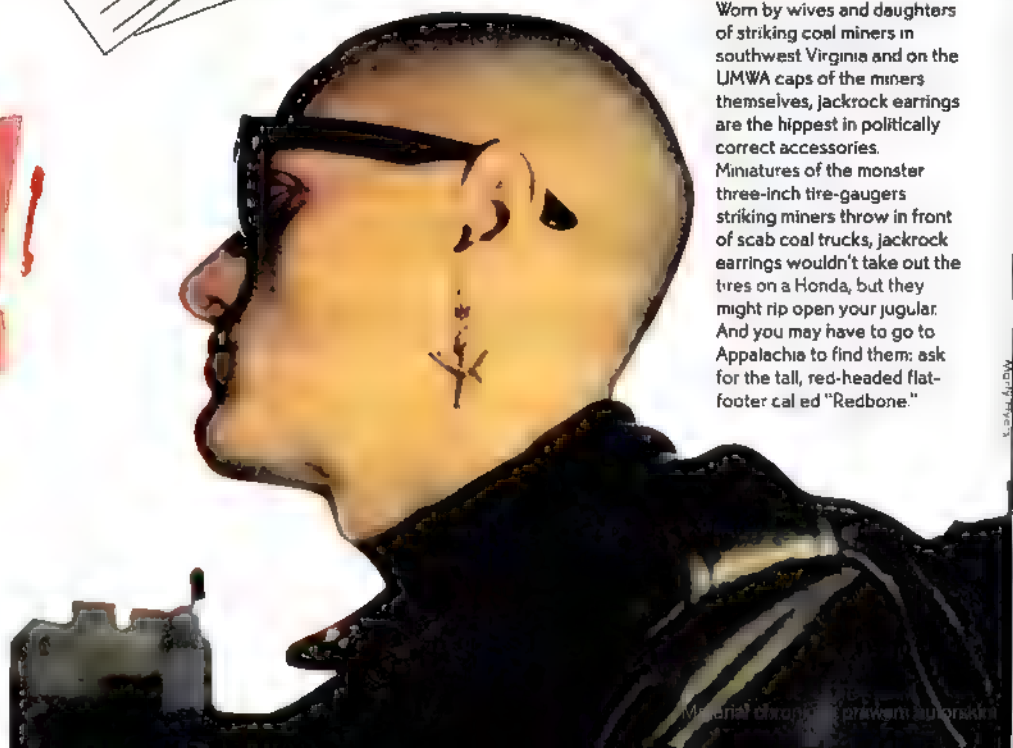
HARRY CREWS

Blood and Grits. That's the feel of Southern novelist Harry Crews, as well as the title of his 1979 collection of nonfiction magazine pieces. Born and raised a dirt farmer, the hard-drinking Crews has published a dozen novels in 23 years. The theme: one man's slow boiling war against the strictures and sleaze of the South, and his need to reconcile blood values with the consumerism which has replaced them. Lydia Lunch, Sonic Youth bassist Kim Gordon and drummer Sadie May love Harry so much they named a band after him. Recommended: *The Knockout Artist*, *A Feast of Snakes*, *A Childhood*.



JACKROCK EARRINGS

Worn by wives and daughters of striking coal miners in southwest Virginia and on the UMWA caps of the miners themselves, jackrock earrings are the hippest in politically correct accessories. Miniatures of the monster three-inch tire-gaugers striking miners throw in front of scab coal trucks, jackrock earrings wouldn't take out the tires on a Honda, but they might rip open your jugular. And you may have to go to Appalachia to find them: ask for the tall, red-headed flat-footer called "Redbone."





Macy's

THE LUXURIOUS

Bullock's

Saks Fifth Avenue

Burdines

UNITED COLORS

Deja Vu

Merry Go Round

Landmark

Marshall Field's

Z. CAVARICCI



Dissing him on record, on video and in print, New York rappers 3rd Bass have made no secret of their dislike of Oakland's MC Hammer. The two rappers now claim that Hammer has taken out a contract on their lives with the notorious LA street gang, the Crips, a charge Hammer denies.

MURDER RAP

It's another hazy morning in Los Angeles, and the two voices of the rap group 3rd Bass are going out over the airwaves of KDAY, LA's 24-hour hip hop station, promoting their debut effort, *The Cactus Album*. The show's host, Greg Mack, makes a surprise call to rapper MC Hammer. Hammer's pissed. 3rd Bass has been dissing Hammer—"MC Household Tool," as they've dubbed him—for no apparent reason. One song even seems to attack his mother. Words are exchanged and 3rd Bass apologizes. Show over. Case closed? On the contrary.

Hammer concedes that dissing is an intrinsic part of rap music, but he says, "in the history of this business there hasn't been anyone playing 'the mother game.' You cross the line when you talk like that." 3rd Bass, however, maintain that the song "The Cactus" simply refers to a Hammer record that was "weak."

"His big record was 'Turn This Mutha Out,'" explains Prime Minister Pete Nice. "On KDAY I was explaining to him that I wouldn't have the lack of respect to get on someone's mother. We use plays on words. Just put two and two together. It's clear that the line refers to his record."

"That's not true," Hammer insists. "It says, 'The cactus turned Hammer's mother out.' That's not a play on words. That's bad business. It took all my professionalism to stop me from actually dealing with them up close and in person. Not coming from a violent aspect, but I'd like to address a person in their face when they want to talk about someone's mother."

3rd Bass's MC Serch believes that will never happen. "I don't think he'd ever come in my face man-to-man and talk about it because he's a punk."

"Ain't that something," chuckles Hammer. "To me that sounds like violence. Now here's a guy probably about 45 or 50 pounds overweight talkin' to a guy who's lean as they come. You can take one look at me and see that I'm in the best condition possible. Of course, I wouldn't be the one to bring up violence, but whenever he does see me face-to-face I would look forward to him saying something or even issuing a challenge."

"There have been a lot of behind-the-scenes problems with



Will MC Hammer nail 3rd Bass?

this, and it's in their best interest to say that they never said anything about my mom. If you know what I mean. It's in their best interest."

Behind-the-scenes problems indeed. Serch claims that Hammer wants 3rd Bass dead, and that he commissioned the notorious LA street gang, the Crips, to carry out the deed. "He put out a contract to have these brothers kill us over the record lyric. Louis Burrell, Hammer's brother and manager, calls Russell [Simmons of Rush Productions], screaming about the Hammer shut, y'know, 'don't send the kids to LA, they're gonna get done.' I met the gentleman that supposedly had the contract on us the night after the radio show. Some people in the Def Jam family from California knew these brothers. We set up a meeting, and actually talked to the brother that was sent down. He said, 'Yo, man, this is nonsense' and turned it around on Hammer. Hammer supposedly,

from what I understand, really lost his mind."

"Ludicrous," Hammer counters. "I wouldn't do anything like that. I'd see him myself, if that was the case. When I'd catch him, I'd grab him by the neck, slap him across the head six or seven times, and watch him cry. He's a little fat chubby guy, you know."

Serch claims that Hammer's reaction would have been different if NWA, LL Cool J or Kool Moe Dee had dissed him in the same way. "He thinks that because we're white, he's gonna push us around and we're gonna be soft about it."

These allegations come to light as Hammer climbs the charts with his new album *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em*, on which the rapper explores such subjects as racism, crime and violence, and makes a conscious effort to change his image from a mere "shallow dancer" to "a guy who knows what's going on in the

world, who cares about the next man." Hammer's concept is to send positive messages out to "hurt" those who are negative. Serch believes that 3rd Bass played a part in Hammer's shift toward social awareness, yet Hammer quickly dismisses this idea, saying his album was completed "way before their first single came out."

Both Hammer and 3rd Bass stress that they don't want their careers reduced to an "LL Cool J/Kool Moe Dee type of thing."

"It's not like that," Serch boasts, "because to be honest with you, he can't be that competitive with us. We'll smoke his ass."

Hammer remains cool in the wake of this prediction. "As time goes on, a group like that will pass, and the Hammer will still be going on doing his thing."

—Mark Blackwell



3rd Bass—Please, Hammer, don't hurt us!

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Canada's most popular sibling musical aggregate, the *Cowboy Junkies*, gained major MTV exposure with their cover of "Sweet Jane." Now they're back with a new album and an old story.

Article by Gina Arnold

Photography by Chris Buck

SISTER RAY

When Margo Timmins, lead singer for the Cowboy Junkies, talks, people listen. She speaks, as she sings, very quietly and intensely, in a low voice tinged with anxiety. You have to lean closer to hear every nuance, and then it seems like she didn't have much to say in the first place. Just everyday things, spoken in simple sentences that are full of a deep contentment.

"Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning," the first single on the Cowboy Junkies' new album, *The Caution Horses*, is a case in point. Though a simple catalog of the events in an ordinary day—like many other songs on the album—its theme is a woman's newfound freedom, which is a subject Margo Timmins knows something about. In the space of five years, Margo has transformed from a high school dropout with a meaningless and boring day job as a legal secretary into a woman whose resumé includes a college degree (BA, Ryerson University, 1985) and current employment as a rock star.

This may account for the dreamy quality of Cowboy Junkies' music. Margo's whole career as a rock singer is, after all, a dream which only a few short years ago would have never entered her head. Those dreams were left to her older brother Michael, who had long since fled Toronto for more international rock waters

after his Joy Division-inspired band, Hunger Project, broke up.

Margo used to escape Toronto by stealing away and visiting Michael and his best friend Alan Anton in their dingy, one-room flat on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. There, she could lead a rock'n'roll life for at least a week or two. Later Michael and Alan moved to London and formed a "hell-bent noise band" called Germinal, which "would play church basement gigs and only 10 people would show up and one of those would be the vicar." When he sent tapes of Germinal's music back home to Margo, she "thought he was having a nervous breakdown. You know: 'Mom, Dad—it's time to worry about Michael!'"

Four years after leaving Canada, Michael came home, there to start his third and last band, the Cowboy Junkies. Like the first two, this one featured Anton on bass. Initially, the other two members were Michael's siblings John and Peter. (John has since dropped out of the band. Live, the Junkies now feature Jeff Bird on mandolin, fiddle and harmonica, accordion player Jaro Czerwinec, Kim Deschamps on pedal steel, lap steel and dobro and percussionist David Houghton.) Then Michael decided to ask Margo, whom 10 years ago he'd rejected as vocalist for Hunger

Project ("She stank," he recalls), to try singing along." I figured," shrugs Michael, "she was a legal secretary. How much lower could she go?"

The Cowboy Junkies' thing was to play 10-minute jams at glacial tempos on old blues songs—songs like Robert Johnson's "Me and the Devil" and John Lee Hooker's "Forgive Me." Soon they started writing their own songs—songs which had an added country twist picked up from countless country stations heard touring both the Canadian and the American Midwest.

Michael describes himself as the type of person "who always thought that signing to a major label was tantamount to treason in the 1950s." But when success came knocking at the Cowboy Junkies' door—with their second album, *The Trinity Sessions*, on their own Latent label—he didn't have a choice. A

cover of Lou Reed's "Sweet Jane" prompted record companies to start a bidding war that didn't end until the Junkies had achieved all of their demands regarding artistic license, as well as a massive advance.

"A golden apple-dream come true," says Margo

"My thing always was, 'okay, well, I'm not artistic, but I can appreciate good art. And people like Michael really need people like me out there, because somebody's got to be listening.' It took me a long time to realize that I could stand alone as an individual and be an important part of the Cowboy Junkies. I've always just felt like a tag-along sister. You know you're more often told that you're an idiot than that you're wonderful. But if you're given the right environment and the right opportunity to shine, it's amazing what you find out you can do."



Jazz

The Dish, The Dirt, The Inside Dope
Sussed by DANNY FIELDS

It is well known that film director **Oliver Stone** takes liberties with history for the sake of telling a good tale, e.g., his depiction of the Syracuse police department as Gestapo monsters in "Born On The Fourth Of July," when they actually behaved in a decent manner by the standards of the time. But I was delighted to hear that Stone's casting department was looking for someone to portray **Jim Morrison's** "short, fat, female press agent" in his upcoming biopic, "The Doors." The character portrays the band's publicist at the time of Morrison's original entry into New

York underground society, which would have been the period from December, 1966, when the Doors first played in New York at a club called Ondine's, until the following autumn when they were world-famous. Delighted, that is, because I—I mean it—was Morrison's New York press agent that whole time, and do remember certain things, with the exception of having been at any time, a short, fat female. Anyhow, one famous actress passed up the role, and it was then that my erstwhile business partner (and Seymour Stein's erstwhile wife), **Linda "Realtor to the Stars" Stein** was asked to audition for it. She is not unknown to the Stone organization, having been the model for the **Sylvia Miles** character in "Wall Street." What a small world!! And Stone and his scriptwriters are trying to make it even smaller: the scene for which Stein read has Morrison, **Andy Warhol**, **Edie Sedgwick**, **Gloria Stavers**, (editor of *16* magazine, and a great friend and champion of the singing Door), and the short, fat press agent at Warhol's Factory for the first meeting of the two great men. Folks, this never happened. Andy and Jim (played in the movie by **Crispin Glover** and **Val Kilmer**, respectively) met in the wine cellar of the Delmonico Hotel, where Elektra had a party to

celebrate "Light My Fire" reaching number one. Afterwards, the two of them, plus the short, fat press agent, **Gloria Stavers**, **Steve Paul** (owner of the Scene, New York's hippest nightclub) and **Steve Harris** of Elektra Records got into a limo and rode around, while Morrison hung out the window vomiting. We went to the apartment house of Elektra president **Jac Holzman** on 12th Street, where Morrison was not admitted, and where he vomited again, on the marble floor of the lobby. Stavers and Harris went to dinner. Andy kept saying, "Let's go back to the Factory," but instead we took the star back to his hotel. As for Edie, Morrison had met her earlier in the summer at "The Castle," a house in the Hollywood Hills where she was staying with **Nico**, while having an affair with **Dino Valente**, a name to conjure by. A short, fat press agent monitored that scene as well, but that's another story, which probably won't make it into Oliver Stone's version of Jimbo's life and putative death.

Now comfortably launched on a solo career with the album *Candleland*, **Ian McCulloch**, formerly of Echo and the Bunnymen, speaks modestly of his current ambitions, and not very highly of the decision of the rest of the group to maintain the name after his departure. "We couldn't grow anymore, ended up in limbo and had to kill it off," he said. "That's why I think the name shouldn't carry on. I tell people it doesn't worry me that much about them using the name, but it does." Would he go so far as to call what they are doing dishonest? "Yes, but that's their choice. When I'm 50, I'll feel good about what I did. Even if I end up playing clubs in Paris, at least it's on my own terms. It's like the Velvet Underground without Lou Reed doing the record 'Squeeze.' It's so sad." At that point in our talk I mentioned to Ian that movie critic **Donald Lyons** had dubbed the band *Velveteen Underground* after Lou left. "Well," said Ian, "call this one Echoes of the Bunnymen."

Police barricades, emergency vehicles and a helmeted riot squad lent a touch of old Romania to West 57th Street, where thousands of incredibly excited teenage girls thronged the streets outside New York's Hard Rock Cafe on a weekday morning, having heard that the **New Kids on the Block** would be there for a "very special press conference." In conjunction with Hasbro Toys, "the world's largest toy manufacturer," the New Kids launched the "official" New Kids on the Block dolls and accessories,

including: 12"-high dolls of all five kids in "casual street-look fashions"; concert clothes to fit the dolls, "like the ones the Kids really wear on stage"; a "Stage Playset," which includes tiny guitars, amps, keyboards, mikes and a "special stand that lets a New Kids doll dance to one of their hits"; plus real telephones, microphones, cassette players and an AM/FM radio with a "wild triangular shape." Following an introduction by toy manufacturing execs straight out of central casting, the Kids emerged and stood in front of tables covered with their universe in miniature. Each lifted his own doll and waved it, as TV crews and photographers went berserk. The flesh-and-blood idols seemed for the most part to approve of the Lilliputian plastic-and-rubber idols, except for a momentarily chagrined **Danny Wood**, who in the course of groping and squeezing the Danny Wood doll frowned, leaned into the mike, and announced, "No buns!" The wee kids go on sale in August at \$12.99 each



Jim Morrison



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VELVET MADMAN

It took the death of Andy Warhol to bring
John Cale and Lou Reed back together. *Songs for 'Drella*—A
Fiction is their first collaboration in 20 years.

Article by Scott Cohen

John Cale bumped into Lou Reed at the party following Andy Warhol's memorial service in 1986; it was the first time they had spoken to each other since Lou kicked John out of the Velvet Underground. Lou had been the star of the band, John, the back-up star. John had been a shadow in a band of shadows. Lou wrote and sang the songs, John invented the Underground sound. Lou was cool, John was flamboyant. Lou had attitude, John had charm. Lou was street smart, John, art smart. His presence as innovator and arranger wasn't felt until he was gone.

At the same party, painter Julian Schnabel came up to Cale and said, "Look, you got to do something for Andy." Cale replied it would be a bit tough to do something for him now. "No, no," said Schnabel. "Let's write something." Then he said, "Let's get Lou over here."

"What the hell is Julian doing?" Cale wondered. "Does he always do this for people? The last time I saw him, he was a busboy at the Lower Manhattan Ocean Club, and now that he's got these paintings with the plates smashed all over them, he's got a whole new view of life." A few days later, Cale and Lou agreed to do a collaboration. Cale said, "Look, Lou, this is the way we're going to do it—down the middle, no messing around." In 10 days they wrote 14 songs. They had titles, quotes from Andy, reminiscences. There's only two of them playing. No band, no personality problems. "I don't know why it worked so well," says Cale, "except that the music was the most important thing."

'D*rella* (a combination of Dracula and Cinderella—a 60s nickname Warhol didn't particularly like) is an intensely personal 15-song musical tribute to Warhol based on his life and career. It was written mostly by osmosis. Lou and John went into a rehearsal studio, turned the tape machine

on and started reminding themselves about what they enjoyed most about hanging out with Andy and all their favorite bits about him. They organized these reminiscences into topics, which became titles for songs: "All You Got to Do Is Work"; "Starlight Open Wide"—about Andy breaking into movies and Hollywood; "Style It Takes"—about Andy trying to break into the uptown art world and how Edie Sedgwick was the ticket, "Valorie Solanis" and how obsessed she was with Andy controlling her life, etc.

Prior to the recording, released in March, "'Drella" had its debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music last December. During the hour-long performance, slides of period photos served as a backdrop. While not exactly a Velvet reunion, the two key band members displayed the two-chord rush for which the band is noted. At times Cale played viola, but it's his minimalist La Monte Young piano score that dominated the music.

John grew up in Garmant, Wales, in a community of terrace housing squashed together inside a small valley. On one side were the coal miners and on the other side the sheep farmers. John's father was a coal miner. His mother taught him piano until he went to grammar school. Then she thought he should spend more time studying law or medicine, so he wouldn't end up like his father. The more that happened, the more time John spent playing piano. The harder his mother pushed him in the direction of money, the harder he pushed towards music.

John was the local teddy boy. He wore his hair slicked back in a DA. John also had a bronchial problem, which wasn't unusual in the damp Welsh climate, and took heavy doses of Dr. Brown's mixture laced with morphine. He was hallucinating practically his whole childhood.

Every Friday night at 7:00, he would listen to the

short wave radio in his parent's living room as Alan Freed played the Top 10 hits from America. John also listened to every piece of contemporary classical music he could find, like John Cage, David Tudor and Robert Kraft.

There was a pile of instruments at school, but when it was his turn to pick one, there weren't any violins left, so he chose the viola. There is no way to play rock'n'roll on the viola.

John studied composition at London University's Goldsmith's College, worked on a musicological dissertation and listened to avant-garde and electronic music. He was unaware that the Rolling Stones were playing in a club down the block. Instead, he paid attention to who was playing which instrument in which orchestra, the way a baseball fan follows different teams and knows which players are good at which positions.

That's how John got to America. He sent some scores he had written to American composer Aaron Copland, then the dean of American music, and met him in London in 1963. Copland was not impressed with John's work, but he was knocked out by how much he knew about all these musicians and awarded him with a scholarship to study Modern Composition at Tanglewood, in Lenox, Massachusetts.

"I can't promise you any performances of your work, because they seem to be very violent," Copland told him. By then Cale had written to Cage to see if he could study with him. "Unlike most conductors who tell musicians how to play a piece," says Cale, "Cage gave his musicians the freedom to play however they wanted. But Cage had already passed the baton on to La Monte Young, saying he was the most interesting composer in America. At the time, Young was writing pieces in which musicians talk to a piano or scream at a plant until it dies."

After spending the summer in Tanglewood, Cale

moved to the Lower East Side and worked with Young for almost a year until he got a better job with the Velvet Underground

"Lou worked as a songwriter for Pickwick. He had made a single called 'The Ostrich' and needed a backup band. I had been at some party where someone, seeing I had long hair, came up to me and said, 'You look very commercial, I'd like you to come over to the record company.' I went up and there was Lou making coffee. The record company wanted us to go out and promote 'The Ostrich,' which we did—me, Lou, Tony Conrad, who was also working with La Monte and Cage, and Walter De Maria—as The Primitives. Meanwhile, Lou was playing me songs on acoustic guitar he had written, like 'Heroin,' that he said Pickwick wouldn't let him record, so I said let's do it ourselves."

Lou and John went up to 125th Street in Harlem, to audition in a blues club called the Baby Grand, but at the end of the night they were told to forget it, so they went outside, played on the sidewalk and made a bunch of money until the cops told them to move along. John was a creative and inventive force with a solid classical background; Lou was purely a rock'n'roll animal. Both had their ideas about music and were equally aggressive in their approach. It was a mismatch made in hell.

"Lou and I had one of these terrible rapports where you think the other guy is thinking what you're thinking, but he's not. He couldn't figure me out, and I couldn't figure him out. The thing we had in common was this obsession with risk-taking. That was the *raison d'être* for the Velvet Underground. We both had tremendous drive and determination and we both hit out at anything that came our way. Flower Power? Get out of here. Give people hard drugs. Give them the drugs they want. Acid? Give 'em heroin. It wasn't so much the flavor of the drug; it was the mentality, the mentality of the West Coast. It was so vapid. We thought doing evil was better than doing nothing."

After forming the Velvet Underground, John and Lou met Andy Warhol at the Café Bizarre, a tourist trap in Greenwich Village where Andy came to hear them play. Andy secretly wanted to be a rockstar, but managing and producing one was almost as great. He created a mixed-media event called the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, which toured the country in the late 60s, and the Velvets were the featured band. They also became part of the Warhol scene of artists, movie stars, drug addicts, drag queens and assorted freaks.

"We'd get up at 2:00 in the afternoon and go to Andy's factory. I went with a purpose: to work. I wasn't involved in playing the games they played, because there were people up there who were experts at them and I wasn't. Andy was the expert. Lou was completely spooked by him; he didn't understand what made this man tick. Lou's was an endless search to find the button. But I got so much enjoyment out of bouncing ideas back and forth with Andy that for me it was great, whatever it was. There was a certain intellectual quirk, however, that put me off. The repetition that I found in Andy's work I had been aware of from being with La Monte; I thought Andy came late in the day to repetition, but I've since learned that was not true. He was probably the closest collaborator that anybody would want to have. For all the ideas that Lou and I came up with, as insubordinate as they were to anything that was artistically viable at the time, he was the guy supporting it and telling us not to forget about it. He was definitely a co-conspirator in all of it. We'd spend the day at the Factory and wind up at Max's at night."



It wasn't so much the flavor of the drug; it was the mentality, the mentality of the West Coast. It was so vapid. We thought doing evil was better than doing nothing.

Max's Kansas City was the center of New York nightlife from the mid-60s through the early 70s. That's where all the artists, writers, fashion designers, models, movie stars, heiresses, superstars and rockstars hung out. It was one fantastic multimedia event, and the Velvet Underground was the house band.

One of Max's regulars was Betsey Johnson. At the time she was working as a designer at Paraphernalia, the hippest boutique of the 60s, where the Kennedys and all the big socialites and models bought their clothes. She would work there from nine-to-five and then go to Max's, which was the test; she could see how people reacted to what she had made earlier that day.

Betsey Johnson: "I met John in Max's when the Velvet Underground wanted me to do their clothes. I was so excited, because I thought they would want to rock out, but Lou wanted basically a Levi's jacket and jeans in grey suede, and I don't like designing like that so much. Sterling and Maureen liked velvet, so I did a lot of studded velvet. But John wanted me to make costumes where his hands would go on fire. He'd wear masks all the time, and I thought, this is my kind of man. I ended up making him tight black Edwardian suits made of canvas, with ruffles and bows."

"Before John and I got married, we lived together for a year in the Chelsea Hotel, then in a loft on LaGuardia Place where Nico lived under the kitchen sink. When we decided to get married, the Velvets were all against it, probably because John was the first to have a girl come into the group. I think Lou saw it as a threat; John and Lou always had a star problem. I'm sure that Lou didn't personally dislike me, but he thought I could cut a good pair of pants. We were going to have this funky wedding at City Hall. *Ladies Home Journal* found out about it and were going to throw this big bash afterwards, so they could photograph the freaky rock'n'roll scene. About a week before the wedding, John went to the hospital for a blood test because he was turning bright yellow. Sure enough, John had hep and stayed in the hospital for four months. *Ladies Home Journal* wanted me to go ahead with the wedding without John; they said they'd just take a picture of him and strip it in later."

Just as the Underground, was getting ready to go play a concert in Cleveland, Lou got Moe and Sterling together and said, "If Cale goes to Cleveland, I don't go."

"Obviously there was a lot of competition," says Cale, "although when Lou and I fought, it was over ideas and how to resolve them. By the time we got to 'White Light/White Heat,' we were a road band, and I think we just got sick of being a band. The music got to be entirely secondary; there was too much social antics and acrimony going on. I wanted to be a producer. I wanted to write songs. It was something I had to do by myself to prove that I was my own person again."

So what did you do?

"I produced Iggy and the Stooges and Nico for CBS. Iggy's a very normal, well-adjusted fellow who has this magical ability to change his persona. He's like a chameleon. One minute he was threatening someone with a table, then he'd start caressing the table. He could turn a situation around to his benefit."

And Nico?

"In 1971, when Nico was doing *Marble Index*, she was working in a completely European tradition that was startling in its difference and focus from what any other female singers were doing around that time. She studied with Eria Kazan, and he told her that whatever she did, do it in your own time, and she took that advice, boy, and built a whole lifestyle around it. Her sense of timing was extraordinary. Everything about her style was very paced. You'd have to adjust your body clock to a totally different scale to be around her. Her life wasn't something you wanted to observe all the time; it was better to walk in and out of, like a play."

Who else did you produce at CBS?

"They gave me a job in quadraphonic remix. I remixed some of the greatest acts on CBS that never saw the light of day. Then I went to Warner Brothers and the same problem popped up; should they go quadraphonic? Then Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers popped up. Jonathan had this tape with 'Hospital' and all these other songs that were so quirky and naive. Warner Brothers went to great lengths to promote him. I mean, they flew in managers from all over."

What was Jonathan's problem?

"He just became contrary, and success was probably not what he wanted."

Did his ideas, like having the drummer pound his fist into a baseball mitt, appeal to you?

That was a great idea. It was more that he wanted me to play piano and be part of the band that wasn't such a great idea."

Didn't you miss performing?

It was obvious to me after doing my *Paris 1919* and *Academy* that I couldn't just do albums in a vacuum. You got to go out and promote them. You got to go and do the stuff that Lou had already undertaken years ago, to put your ass on the line and perform. Making *Fear and Slow Dazzle* was a chance to do it. I tried to recreate the Velvet Underground, but I wasn't successful."

Is 'Drella the first of many collaborations between you and Lou?

"It's a beginning. We tried to do something that's very easy to do. There are other things I want to do that are more difficult than this—that I think Lou and I can do. I think Lou and I can do a lot. We can now get on with something more ambitious. This, though, is like a responsible piece of photojournalism. It's one way of dealing with the past."



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Chasing the Dragon

The reality of LA's massive rock scene is that heroin is tripping up many of the bands who rule it—and for those coming up it has become the great legitimizer. Bad Boys on bikes, the spike and the hype.

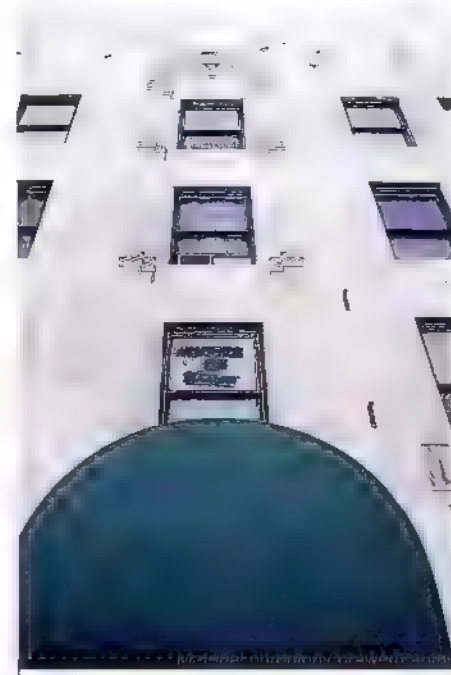
Article by Dean Kuipers

Nineteen eighty-nine was the year that LA's Monster Rock finally blistered the ass of the world—confirming Hollywood as the last scene on the continent (New Jersey notwithstanding) with the goods to conquer America's imagination—from packing stadiums to reclothing the nation in bandanas, torn jeans and cowboy boots. For stone rockers, LA became the home of the American dream again.

But when Axl Rose snaked to the microphone last October as Guns N'Roses rattled out an opening set for the Rolling Stones' LA Coliseum show, he took a swipe at his band and cut to Hollywood's sensitive core. Smack was crippling his act and he was clearly pissed off at what it was doing to so many of his friends in the LA scene.

"Unless certain people in this band get their shit together," he barked, "these will be the last Guns N'Roses shows you'll ever see." Then they lurched into "Mr. Brownstone," a tune Slash wrote about heroin. Everyone in the music industry flinched. A shock wave ran through the press, as though this private menace had become visible for the first time. After all, Mick had never confronted Keith onstage.

Smack has always been a taboo topic—at least until the party's over and the band's dissolved. Or somebody's dead. But there's a buzz going around Hollywood. Guns N'Roses, as a band,





Axl Rose: the bad boy of LA Rock is a symbol of its excesses, but he's also become an unlikely hero, breaking the industry's silence in an effort to save his own band and others from smack. Opposite: The Billiards Building, Hollywood's real Rock'n'Roll High School. Forty-odd bands, 40-ounce Schaeffers, four spandexed girls to every guy. Over one million served.

have been struggling with a smack problem that is entrenched in Hollywood's music community like nowhere else in the country. Axl is raging not only at his own band, but also at Hollywood's tight hard rock circle that doesn't mind sacrificing a star for rock'n'roll.

"Half of Hollywood is hooked on dope right now," says the wife of one well-known LA rocker. "And the other half are pissed off about it." In the last year, she has seen heroin scuttle countless music projects: development money for entire albums spent on epic binges; deals blown; friends and bandmates ending up hating each other.

The night after Axl's rant at the Coliseum, Slash ambled onstage in a Betty Ford Clinic T-shirt to make his own apologies. "Last night I was up here and I didn't even know it. Smack and all that crap ain't what it's about, and Gun N' Roses isn't going to be one of those bands who break up over it."

Hollywood's current gang of hard rock and metal scions have turned to heroin as the Bad Boy drug of rage and outrageousness. A bunker mentality haunts these Hollywood rockers and the scene that supports

them, protecting their after dark illusions of freedom. As hungry and hurting musicians take to tying off, the industry sends out memos and press releases explaining the arrests and accidents. Rockers show up loaded at intimate clubs and sooner or later sock one another on MTV. They fall off the stage and puke down your sister's dress on bad nights in small town hockey arenas. Fans speculate about which member of certain LA bands will die first.

Junk isn't happening like this anywhere else in the country today. Shooting smack or speedballs has never been more out of vogue in other parts of the U.S. Think of the rock clubs or the high school parking lots in your own hometown. Hysteria and criminalization have driven hard drugs underground in the music and entertainment circles of New York, Boston and San Francisco. But heroin has stayed popular and easy to score in Hollywood.

In LA, beginners dabbling in smack find it on the streets cheaper and easier than pot. Way cheaper than coke. Almost like buying a six-pack of beer. But if you have more cash, it'll take that, too. The cheap fabric of junkie chic.

"Last night we had a little fight," says Stan, rummaging around the tiny studio in which his band both lives and rehearses. Standing up, he shows the slash mark on his palm and the cut on his forehead. His bass player had pulled a huge, rusty bowie knife on him and attacked in the middle of an argument. The knife, about 10 inches long, was stuck in the wall above the PA speakers.

"This little tiff was caused mostly by heroin. We smoked a little bit last night and he was drunk and got all twisted up." Stan pulls out a bit of foil, left over from chasing the dragon—a smoking technique in which small amounts of powder are heated on foil and the fumes inhaled. Because heroin does not burn or evaporate readily, the brown goo often lasts a long time and several people can get off at once.

"This little dime hit caused a raging fight, man."

Stan (many names and identifying characteristics in this article have been changed) lives on one of the four floors of Western Studios with his band. It is a giant edifice on the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue that was once a casting building for MGM films. A famous pool hall called Hollywood Billiards is in the basement, so the place is sometimes called the Billiards Building. Today, it is the working home to about 40 new rock bands at any one time, few of whom last more than a few months.

The genre of choice here is hard rock, and the building is usually filled with the deafening roar of bands practicing. Stan got up and closed the door, but two girls in spandex and jean jackets pushed it open and walked past him to coddle the guitar player dozing on the bed. The guitar player sat up and rifled through the girls' pockets for money, asking over and over if they had any more. They giggled and let him dig for it.



Long time coming, GSN drummer Dallas Taylor capped Morrison's attitude, Keith Richards' habit and Keith Moon's furious friendship to go way beyond what he calls "acceptable buzz." Taylor learned recently that his liver was damaged by an old dose of Hepatitis B, which is commonly transmitted through shared needles. "I'll never forget," says Taylor, "being 18 years old and being in the studio with Morrison's producer, Paul Rothchild at Sunset Sound Recorders, hearing: 'You guys have to read Murat Sade. You have to be completely degenerate. Things like Keith Moon is doing—like throwing TVs out hotel rooms—that's cool and that gets attention.' That's the motto out here: let's go platinum and then die. Kid's don't know any better. The music industry have taken a bunch of shoe salesmen and tarred them loose in the music business and they're selling shit."

For eight years, Stan was strung out on heroin while playing in a band in the Southwest. His entire band kicked the habit and moved to Hollywood a few months ago to make a fresh start. But Hollywood proved to be a fresh source of dope to Stan and his friends.

"I was able to function pretty well on it, you know," says Stan, sitting back on a stained couch between a couple of makeshift, plywood platforms which serve as beds. "Most people think that if you're strung out you don't do nothin' but hunt dope all day long. But I think alcohol is worse. On alcohol, you become a raving drunk, you know—in fights and shit all the time. I was fairly inspired while I was on it. I just got tired of waking up sick every day, needing something artificial like heroin in order to feel better."

Stan's experience is typical. The story of his band's infighting brought on by smack is one heard throughout the Hollywood rock scene.

"There's a lot of friction that happens with drugs—whether it's between someone who's fucked up and someone who's not, or between two people who are both fucked up," says Errol, an established Hollywood rocker whose band is enjoying the success that Stan still only dreams about. "I was really close to one of the guys in my band when we were both fucked up. Now I can't see him. I've drawn closer to the guy who never had a problem with drugs, who had to sit by and watch us kill ourselves. We put him through a lot of shit, being a stand-up guy, doing what needed to be done, with the other three guys constantly ramming needles in our arms."

Hollywood's thriving clubs are set up to ensure that celebrities and their guests get what they want. The doormen at two of the bigger clubs confirm that many of them have a dealer or two who is "tolerated" inside, so long as they're very pro, very discreet. And that's just out front, on the bar. If the club has a live stage, the backstage area and VIP rooms are guaranteed bust-free.

"There is no better and more enabling profession for a drug addict to go into," claims Errol. "Because it's almost expected that you're gonna be fucked up—

Crosby calls LA a relatively safe haven for rockers, their drugs and their excesses. It's more true now than ever. As the market for hard drugs in other parts of the country tightens up, established Hollywood rockers face little threat of being set up and busted.

or at least drunk—and people are gonna do whatever they can to make sure that you get there and that you're okay and everything's taken care of and we've got a runner to go do things—and even a runner to go cop, sometimes. So you'd have to be really badly fucked up to not be able to get away with it in the music business."

The bigger the star, the better the service. One night, Slash drops in on an impromptu celebrity jam session at Spice, a new, chic club on Hollywood Boulevard. Backstage is a quiet VIP room, separated by a one-way mirror from a dance floor packed like a cattle car. Sam Kinison is there, well on his way to a roaring drunk, playing over and over the guitar riff from Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way." About a dozen well-known rockers are discussing some easy blues tunes to do.

A club lackey comes bounding backstage, pushing through all the other guys to ask, "Slash?"

"Two packs of Marlboros and a bottle of Jack Daniels," he fires back, without missing a beat.

That's where every kid in LA wants to be. In that room. Schmoozing with their fellow stars. On the smiling end of nice club managers with the materiel of

decadence at their disposal. Getting kicks for free.

"The initial drug problem . . . it's everywhere, man," says David Crosby, shooing engineers out of an equipment room at the Record Plant, a legendary LA recording studio, where Crosby, Stills & Nash are working on a new album. "And it's not just common—it's prevalent in younger bands."

"I think that—as much as it's a matter of wanting to have the current pop image of the 'Party hard, dude!' kind of thing, is that they're young and they want to be old, weather-beaten dudes. They want to be tough, to have been through it. And to be soulful."

Crosby's romance with heroin lasted for years, finally breaking down to the usual end-of-the-line choices: either quit cold, go to jail, or die. Crosby went to jail for a year in Texas. He was clean by the time he got out, and went into a long period of recovery in order to stay that way.

"You can get away with it in LA," says Crosby. "You can sort of get away with it in Marin County, but in Texas, the judge said, 'Lookeer here son, we got ta git yore attention. Yer goin' to prison.'"

A recovered David Crosby outside the Record Factory in LA. "Hey David," yells out Graham Nash. "Aren't SPIN the guys who said you were DEAD?!"



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"You want to talk about junkie chic?" asks Dallas Taylor, LA dweller and original drummer for Crosby, Still & Nash. "David Crosby, Dallas Taylor and Keith Richards turned half of Hollywood on to heroin. And we made it cool to do it. And I was a punk, man—a little egomaniac. I wanted to live whatever it took to be a rock star. It hasn't changed. The kids are doing exactly the same things we did, and the jazz guys and so on."

Dallas Taylor knows how painful the Hollywood sunshine can be on the morning after. His junk habit of more than a dozen years may finally cost him a lot more than all his money: it may cost him his life.

"I was in trouble with cocaine way before I was in trouble with heroin. But that was okay! And it's okay



At home in Western Studios with the Outlaws of Excess. Proof that Bad Boys can be excessive about everything except drugs and still be outlaws.

today to snort and smoke a little heroin—it's still chic! They don't think they're addicts or junkies because they don't shoot it. But it doesn't matter if you stick it up your ass with a broom handle, because a habit's a habit.

"It's really hard to convince somebody that their lives are unmanageable when they're living in Bel Aire and they have a Top 10 album. But dead is dead, whether you're dead in the gutter in downtown LA or dead in your Bel Aire bed, you're still gonna stink. That's what we see a lot of: 'Uhn, I got the hottest record in the country right now. You're telling me my life is fucked up?'"

"But I'm five years sober. I don't smoke cigarettes. I'm a vegetarian. I work out three days a week. But the reality is that I'm in liver failure. I need a transplant to live. The damage has been done—to quote a good friend of mine. You can reach a point where it is too late. I carry a beeper. As soon as some kid kills himself in an alcohol-related car accident, I'll probably get his

liver. And that's the hardest part, just waiting for the beeper to go off."

Eventually, smack gets all of your attention. Countless musicians recall crossing that threshold to where very few things matter anymore. The lucky ones get pulled back, slapped hard by the reality that heroin only brings devastation and sometimes death.

Mötley Crüe and the Red Hot Chili Peppers are two veteran Hollywood groups who have gone public with their fights with heroin—after it became clear that their choices were either to quit or to die. The Crüe's Nikki Sixx came within a heartbeat of a fatal OD in December, 1987. Hillel Slovak, the Red Hot's original guitarist, died of an accidental overdose in June, 1988. Both bands describe a broad, local network of friends and users. The Crüe, the Peppers and a growing number of addicts who've kicked dope, such as ex-Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones and Doug Feiger, vocalist for The Knack, are now waging a quiet campaign to save their friends, away from the media and what many say is a music industry that doesn't really care.

Crosby calls LA a relatively safe haven for rockers, their drugs and their excesses. As the market for hard drugs in other parts of the country tightens up, established Hollywood rockers face little threat of being set up and busted. But still, that depends on how many layers of fame stand between a strung-out musician and the law. Young, up-and-coming bands risk their necks copping on the street, while celebrities are catered to by expensive, untouchable dealers. Young rockers take big risks when they reach for the panache of using dope in public, rationalizing that it will put them that much closer to fame.

In the winter of 1989, Faster Pussycat drummer Mark Michals was called by the manager of the motel where his band was camped for their Omaha, Nebraska, g.g. His Federal Express package "had arrived." No place in America could be as dry as Omaha.

A junkie's worst paranoid nightmare came true. Local narcotics agents had already marked the package as containing narcotics and were waiting. According to Douglas County Attorney Patricia Ryan, police found heroin and Buprenex, a prescription painkiller. A few weeks later, after it was clear that Michals would at least face charges for possession, Elektra, the band's record company, issued a press release confirming the arrest. Faster Pussycat frantically recruited Quiet Riot drummer Frankie Banali to finish the tour. Most recent reports say that Michals is out of the band and in LA awaiting trial.

Something like this was bound to happen to Michals, according to a number of his cohorts in LA. Other bands have warned him about his excesses in the past. Once, when he was out on a tear, Slash and Izzy of Guns N' Roses tied Michals up with duct tape and tossed him into an elevator, where they left him.

"Heroin—and I truly believe this—was something that worked for a while and then it just stopped working," says Errol, a kid in his early 20s who finally kicked dope when he was sure he was going to die. An LA native, Errol's band hit college radio like a meteor in the late 80s, flirted with the Grammys and won a huge following across the country. Two of their albums—one of them on a humongous major label—have both pushed into the top 30. "I'm almost grateful to it for keeping me alive. I did what I had to do to keep from sticking a gun in my mouth or something. That softened the pain for

a long time."

Errol agreed to discuss heroin on the rock scene under conditions of limited anonymity. Only 90 days off dope and having kicked before, he didn't want to eat his words if he started using again. More importantly, Errol contended that there were other members of his band still denying that they had a problem with smack.

He remembers the one gig where he realized that he was no longer in control. New Year's Eve, 1988. Errol sat in an easy chair backstage at a club. A huge, boisterous crowd roared out front as he prepared to confront them. His stomach twisted and all the usual rationalizations kicked in. He couldn't go on stage. He was too nervous. So he fixed a little extra dope. In the five years that he'd been strung out, he'd been through this kind of sickness too many times. Fix a little more. Little more. He was exhausted and wanted to obliterate the crowd. Then he tried to stand up and realized he was too fucked up to play.

In LA, beginners dabbling in smack find it cheaper and easier to find than pot. Way cheaper than coke. Almost like buying a six-pack of beer.

Most of the kids out there had never seen him play before. They didn't know that he had an obscene track record of pitching headlong off the front of the stage into the crowd, sometimes almost passing out. Often he fell, sometimes he jumped, but always he remembers trying to shrink away from the sound of his bass as it blasted through the PA. This night, when he walked out on stage, he wobbled for a while, but gathered every shred of willpower he had and made it through.

"Heroin is the perfect drug for live performing," Errol says, beginning his long list of rationalizations. "With the right amount, it just relaxes you, but it doesn't take your muscle coordination away."

"For me, a lot of it is: I'm in a rock band, I'm a quiet person, and I don't really enjoy the company of people who like to go fag-bashing and drive around in pickup trucks. And that's the kind of person I always envision as being someone who likes our music—out in the Midwest, metal kids and stuff. So it's really difficult for me, if I'm not fucked up, to feel like I'm going to disappoint those people."

"It's like that myth we perpetuate—that rock musicians are these crazy guys who just always want to party and fuck broads and all that shit. For me, being fucked up either made me able to do that kind of stuff—the spiel, to go out there and meet people, and even to be one of those type of people—or it gave me an out: if you're a rock'n'roll waster, people go, 'just don't deal with him now,' but at the same time it's still cool to people. That's what you think when you're in the thick of it, anyway."

"Now I know that I didn't look too cool sitting at a table with drool hanging down."

David Crosby recalls the same self-delusions.

"Denial is a state where you will rationalize anything in order to keep doing it," he says. "Now, you

Continued on page 93



ESPIRIT



Interview by Fab Five Freddie

Introduction by Frank Owen

SOUL TO SELL

Nothing as simple as a dance band, London's Soul II Soul is a notion in motion—an idea you can dance to, a concept for sale. Now, the most important new band of the last 12 months is about to release the follow-up to *Keep On Movin'*.

In casual conversation they might talk about the price of good weed, trips on the Concorde, the penthouse suite at the Royalton, Malcolm X and why it's easier for a black man to get a cab in London than in New York. They are the members of what Fab Five Freddie has named the "Black Cartel" and others call the "Funky Dread vanguard."

A provisional list of the members of this organization might include Russell Simmons, Matt Robinson, Spike Lee, Jazzie B and Fab Five Freddie—hip, business-minded cultural agitators who've made a career of rendering black meanings in a culture of commodities. In other words, they've got over without crossover cowardice—the traditional failing of the successful black cultural entrepreneur.

In a recent edition of New York's downtown magazine *Paper*, Freddie said of the Black Cartel: "It's an urban black pop thing, people creating Frankensteins—just a cultural explosion, and the shrapnel is dropping all over the place: on your TV set, on the radio, in your car, in your stereo, in your jeep . . . It's real black, a situation that's operating by any means necessary. It's a whole fuckin' new show. We have summits in different cities and parts of the world where black culture is really happening. It's not something that is being too talked about, because it's still getting its shape. It's a new flavour, the new flow. It's not a Black Pack kind of thing—a tag created by the media and dropped on a few people. These are people who are into each other on the urban tip. It's a black pop life thing from De La Soul up to the Cosby show. It's like fuckin' N.O.T.—Niggers On Top."

According to Freddie, Soul II Soul are "the utopian planet orchestra" of this movement—hip hop beats and Barry White-style strings wedded to a distinctive philosophy that might be called designer ragamuffin. To tie in with the release of Soul II Soul's much awaited second album (untitled at press time), SPIN sent Fab Five Freddie to London to chat with the man that Freddie calls "a black Beethoven."

Yeah Fab 5 Freddie live in London. I just checked into the Columbia Hotel—some fuckin' cruddy shit. Lot of up-and-coming rock bands staying here. I came here before when I was on tour back in the days. I came over here with Afrika Bambaataa and a bunch of other people. Now I'm here again, chillin' like a motherfuckin' villain.

Freddie: Alright Jazzie, what's up?
Jazzie: Sup' Freddie

Let's start by talking about the concept behind Soul II Soul.

That's already been expressed on the track "Jazzie's Groove." We started up as a sound system in the late 70s, early 80s. A way of living—a subculture that we called Funky Dread—grew up around the sound system. The idea of the Funky Dread as a subculture is to crush all those stereotyped images of black people that you get in the media: -black people as muggers, thieves, drug dealers, et cetera. Within the realms of

the club culture, we brought music and fashion together to really establish what Soul II Soul is all about. When we as the members of Soul II Soul put our names to something now it's like a seal of approval.

Imitation is a form of flattery, but it's also a form of thievery. How do you feel about your aesthetic or trademark being forged?

This is a real good time to come to that question. Just two days ago the UK had the British Music Awards, and the ultimate thing happened, where a particular artist or their producers or their record company had been influenced by the Soul II Soul beat and went on to win four awards. In this case, it was Lisa Stansfield. In a situation like that, deep down in my heart knowing that we influenced someone is kind of cool, but it's hard when you don't get recognized by the industry for your contribution to the music.

I've lost a bit of interest in that whole striving to be recognized, though. I don't think it means that much. I mean, it's a bonus, but it's not something you can really take seriously. It's good that I can lend a hand to the people who are up-and-coming, feeling deep down inside that the result is still mine. I'm very proud that we were the first and that in the history books it will always remain a Soul II Soul thing.

Do you think it's a racial issue? Does the fact that Lisa Stansfield is white make it easier for the record industry to tolerate her?

The truth is yes, it is a racial issue. If it's easier for them to market, style and profile somebody of a lighter skin, closer to white, it's right in their eyes, and that's something they can portray and continue to keep a hold of. I'm not dissing her, but someone like Lisa

Stansfield—and all those other artists that come along—they can be controlled. But when an organization as strong as Soul II Soul comes along and blows all that shit out of proportion, then they get worried. We'd be throwing all that shit away because we're not into being exploited. So it's perfect for them to have an *artiste* like Lisa come along.

Tell me the story of "Keep on Movin'."

The way that got hooked up was one night the night club that we ran in Central London's Covent Garden

"Instead of having someone else out there exploiting us, we were going to handle it ourselves."

was to be closed down by the police. Under normal circumstances the door would have been shut and that would have been the end of the Africa Center. But we went and found our rights out—what we could and couldn't do with the law—and we stayed there, and our reasons were concrete and our evidence was in facts, you know, like the building was a refugee place for black people. The building was purposely built to entertain private people and the club was run on a strictly membership basis. All the crap just came together

The police tried to close us down, which we later found out was instigated by the club owners in the area cause they were losing customers or they would see queues of 2,000 people trying to get into the space that would only fit 500 people. We were approached by the fire officers, the Council, the police, the local environment people and shit like that, which put the wind up the people that were actually running the place. But when we found we had the right to be in that building, and all we had to do was take care of things according to this particular rule book which was originally written by that man over there, you know, we found that we could continue to move and that we had the necessary information to keep the place alive. That's how the tune came about. It was about 7:00, 8:00 on Monday morning after the party that night. "Find your own way / We found our own means to stay."

When we were hanging out at the Royalton Hotel, you were explaining the concept of Planet Ard. It sort of seemed like a Utopian vision of what you would like things to be.

Planet Ard is the place in the world where you feel most comfortable—a place where you can retreat to—a last door, which I can close on all the bullshit and negative vibes that people penetrate me with all the time. Planet Ard is somewhere where there is music, lots of sunshine, happy people, you know—all those things.

Did you ever realize that you could have such a huge effect on the social and musical consciousness of America and the rest of the world?

BON JOVI



Obviously, no. I didn't know what to expect. At most, I just wanted to be accepted by more of my brothers and sisters throughout the world, with them listening and grasping exactly what I was putting down on vinyl both lyrically and musically. And knowing that there's a message and that it's a positive one

You seem to have a lot of understanding about the business side of making music. Explain a little about that aspect of Soul II Soul.

Well, throughout our business or whatever we endeavor to do, you have the situation that there's nobody there who can understand your immediate needs. Which is one of the reasons that black people in this country have always fallen down. They end up getting to a certain level and beyond that, they are unable to see, because there's nobody else there to give them the knowledge and the experience they need. In my history, I did my homework and actually sat down and studied the whole British scene. I wanted to know what happened to reggae, dance, calypso, jazz and all kinds of music. I've also learned through situations where I've been burnt out of clubs by people who just wanted to sleep next door, not understanding that this is our space and we were forced into this particular area to have the festivities.

Burnt out literally?

I've been burnt out of at least three clubs, one of them when we were all still in there. This was the early 80s, and I went through all that kind of racial business and all those attacks, and not dealing with it by saying all these people are on top of me. I was fighting fire with fire so to speak. So I attained certain levels of knowledge which kept me close to the street, but I still

had the common sense to deal with the authorities. When we first went into the warehouse party situation in the mid-80s, we were the first house system to really bring together black and white people on such a large scale, playing soul and reggae music in derelict buildings—in spaces which would hold 4,000 to 5,000 people

These were outlaw parties?

Right. There we had to take full control of people from when they walked in to when they left the place,

“One day I'd like to buy a car that's built by a black company, invest my money in a bank that's owned and run by blacks.”

even in parking their cars and having an orderly fashion out on the street. Which showed that we had the knowledge and had the ability to take care of our own and control it ourselves. A lot of our other ideas went over because we were a young generation and our ideas were a little bit more hard-headed. I was becoming this businessman. We were collecting finances, and a lot of money was coming in and out through the door. You know, dealing with the relevant people, like paying off whoever you have to pay off and sorting out wages. Instead of taking the money out

and squandering it—buying cars, et cetera—we put money to uses which were to continue our longevity in the whole business of club entertainment

So by putting the money literally back into the business, you were able to expand into other areas. Tell me about the Soul II Soul shops.

Well, it's a fashion thing. It's a culture thing. A place where the people of the club world, if you like, can come in to obtain accessories for part of their growing up. Everybody follows something when they're growing up—some people become punks, some are rockers, whatever—and this whole club scene that we instigated in the 80s we decided to take further. Instead of having someone else out there exploiting us, we were going to handle it ourselves.

The idea of the shops and boutiques started in the clubs, where we were selling merchandise, food, records, et cetera. One step led to another, and we were able to employ our own people, which was a positive thing, giving me personally more respect in terms of my community. Then, when I looked at it from a bird's-eye point of view it was something that was necessary in order to keep that inspiration. You know, we weren't going out every night and just fucking about, 'cause in the club world you had all these different people from different walks of life who were socializing. So the whole idea and atmosphere of the stores was to keep everything complete in its own realm. People who wanted to understand a little more about why these guys are up playing music and being loud until 5:00 in the morning were now able to come into the stores and see for themselves.





What are some of your other business plans?

The vibe is to own as much stuff of our own ourselves, or myself personally. Investing my money in the best possible ways for the future as opposed to the present. So I got something to look forward to, other people will have something to look forward to and all these things. Maybe others will see that they could be doing that shit, too, so it's partly an inspiration for them. I'd like to invest my money back into my own kind of community. One day I'd like to buy a car that's built by a black company, invest my money in a bank that's owned and run by blacks. I've been doing a lot of flying lately and it would also be nice to invest some of my money in my own airline.

What about the musical aspects of the company?

We built the business now to the point where we have two recording studios, and I'm going to build another digital recording studio space, an office and a record label. I have my own A&R people who are in the club world, not down in the pub listening to the jukebox or going to a seminar in America or asking, "which is the next best record?" We want the people we have to develop. Dealing with all those things is part of the whole idea of what Soul II Soul is. I can now give an opportunity to a black British person who

ordinarily wouldn't have that. That gives strength to all black people all over the world, 'cause if we're able to do it, they can do it there.

Say a little more about the background of black Britain. A lot of Americans are not aware of the fact that there's a large, thriving black community over here.

Well, in a way we let everybody in the world know exactly what's happening, to help bring us, the black people, culturally together and make them understand that there are other black people that exist all over the world. Hence the fact that in a place like Norway, for example, there would be a community of black people, and of course here in the UK and all over the different parts of Europe. You can see that musically, through bands like Milli Vanilli and shit like that. [Freddie chuckles.]

When I was leaving school there was nothing the Careers teacher could offer me if I wanted to become an artist—something that I culturally could do. Therefore, I'm giving someone else the opportunity to work in the store printing T-shirts, making medallions, making records, taking photos, making videos, making art—these are things that we, as black people, are naturally born to do.

The only thing that I don't deal with, when it comes to black people's real spiritual and natural abilities, is athletics. Instead of talking about the football match and who got their head kicked in, the kids of the club world are going out and expressing themselves and socializing. We've managed through Soul II Soul to give opportunities to the youth out there who would otherwise be in amusement arcades, robbing, stealing—you know, furthering the stereotypes of society.

Are you planning to continue the idea of making records as a quicker means to this end? Obviously selling four million records is an inspiration to the people around you. When we were hanging out in New York, you were talking about starting a magazine.

I have ideas for a magazine that I'm still pursuing. I have ideas to make a movie. I have ideas to open a hospital to take care of elderly people. I have an idea for schools which can directly give the forms of education that are necessary for us to have.

You basically are planning to become Prime Minister. In your wildest dreams—if Ronald Reagan can become president of the USA, I mean . . .

It may seem and sound that way, but I'm not that politically minded. All I'm doing is seeing everyday about what's happening around us and how our people are misled, and all I want is for our own people to get equality and justice. That's what I'm standing for, and if it means my being a politician, fuck it, I'd get the job done. Somebody's got to do it—get houses in the right places and get jobs in the right places and take care of families and get good medicine and all the other things. And I'm not only talking about this tiny space on the map, London. The reason I'm standing up for certain things as Soul II Soul, or as the Funky Dread, is just so my people can get their own and see somebody with success—somebody they can relate to, who gives them the courage and determination to stand up and and say, "Listen," you know, "go out there and do the right thing." Do you know what I'm saying?

When you talk about "do the right thing," brothers in America—people trying to set an example like Spike Lee, Public Enemy, a lot of rap groups, other brothers in the black community—are coming from a similar background—from a party scene, trying to find a means to an end through entertainment. A lot of the ideas that you speak about sound good in print but might not always be sketched out on your records, even though they are concrete, specific ideas. How do you manage to balance the music and the message?

I think it's important to keep all those things separate and deal with it like that, 'cause that's where ambiguity gets in the way. The way you can make mistakes is by letting off information to the wrong people who can turn it into mayhem and make it work against you. I'm into music for the music's sake. The lyrical input is for those who can see and for those who can hear.

Beyond that, I'm going to have to spread that message through a comic book, through a film . . . That's why I think a few people have overstepped the mark when they make it into that much of a political issue, because at the same time we're there to dance. And in the arms of dancing we shall hold on. In holding on, we will go back to life, and in order for us to go back to life, we're going to keep on moving.

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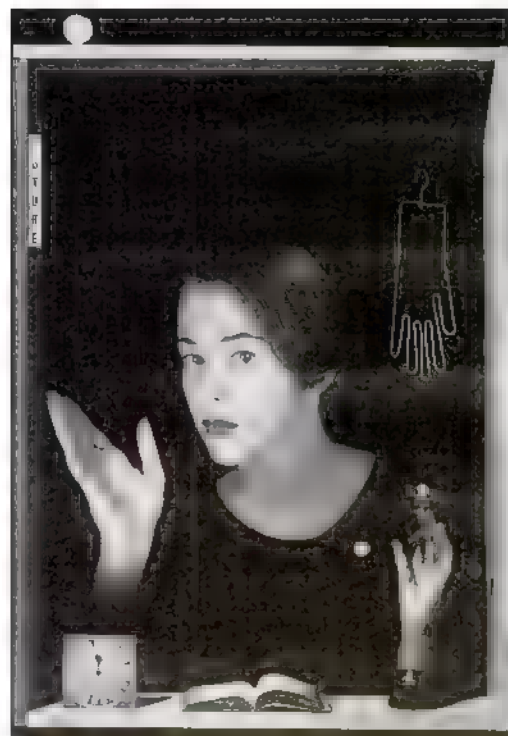
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"IN MY BOOK OF DREAMS

THE SPINE IS BOUND TO LAST A LIFE

TOUGH ENOUGH TO TAKE THE POUNDING

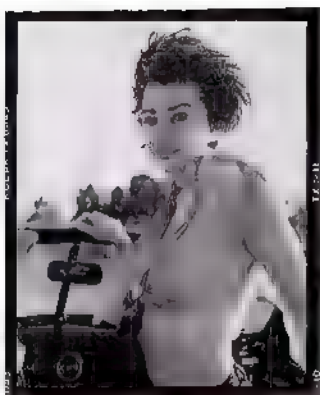
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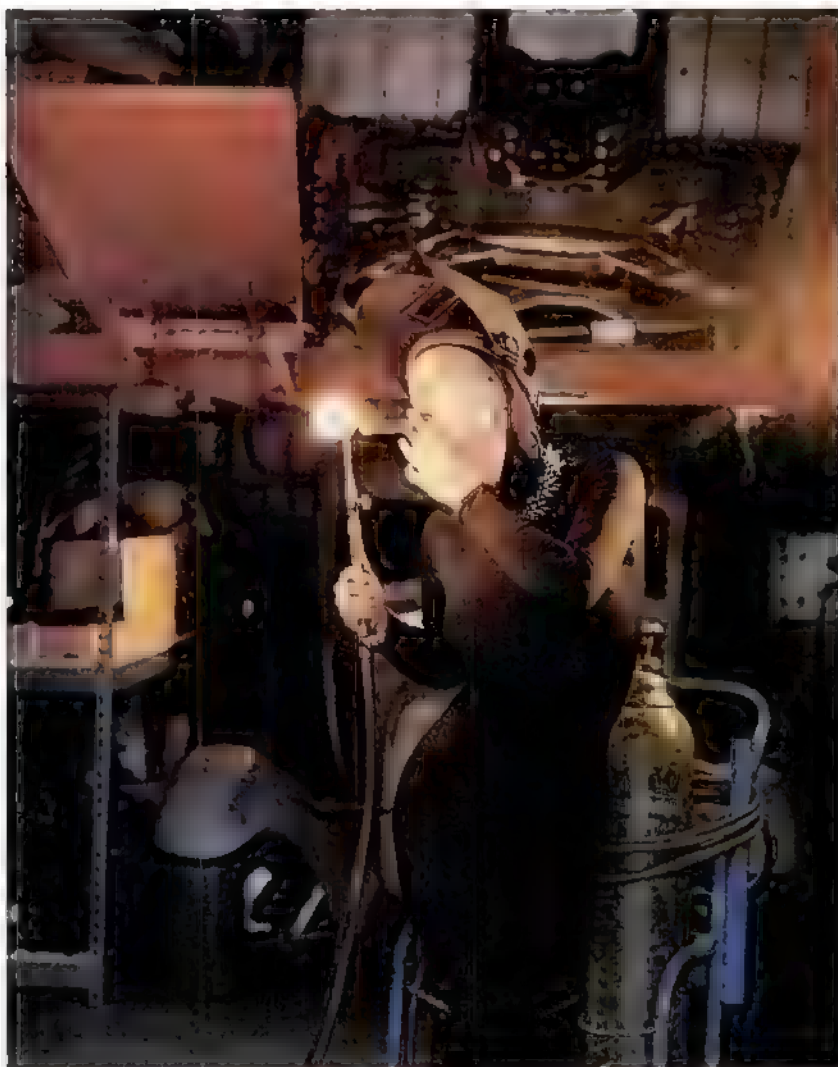
Styled by Arianne Phillips

Text by Scott Cohen

Left
Earrings-Van Der Straaten/Showroom 7, NYC
Black lycra halter jumpsuit-Patricia Fields, NYC
Cropped Flight Jacket-Pepe
Model-Brigitte/Bordeaux Models, LA
Car-1932 Chevy Roadster

Above
Multi-color chiffon blouse-Kathleen Crawford/Showroom 7, NYC
Jeans-Levis 501
Hair and makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Style
Model-Blu/Elite
Car-1946 Ford Convertible

Right
Black lycra jumpsuit-Patricia Fields NYC
Silver necklace>Showroom 7 NYC
Ring-Robert Lee Morris/Artwear
Hair and Makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Style
Model-Brigitte/Bordeaux Models, LA
Garage-California Street Rods, Huntington Beach

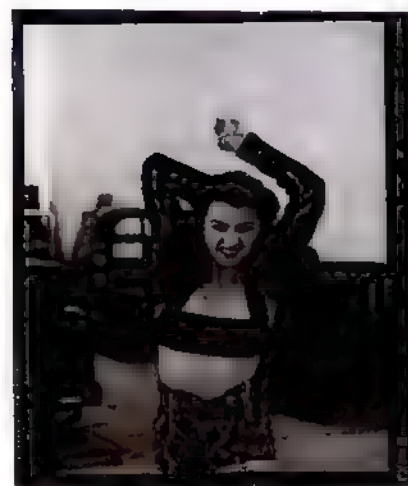
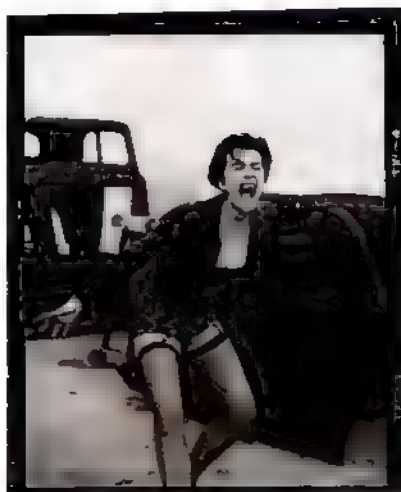


FOUR ON THE FLOOR

Black lycra hotter jump suit-Patricia Fields, NYC
Cropped light jacket-Pepe
Earrings-Van Der Straaten/Showroom 7, NYC
Rings-Robert Lee Morris/Artwear
Shoes-Nano
Hair and makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Styles
Model-Bridget Bardeaux Models, L.A.
Car-1932 Chevy Roadster



Fake fur leopard shorts-Hysterics, NYC
Black bandeau top-Patricia Fields, NYC
Leather jacket-Agnes B.
Garter-Deborah Marquet
Silver thorn bracelet-Showroom 7, NYC
Earrings-Artwear
Hair and makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Style
Model-Bridget Bardeaux Models, L.A.



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AIRWALK



Black vinyl bustier-Deborah Marquet
Black suede shorts-Agnes B.
Stockings-Nona
Silver necklace-Gen York
Tire-BF Goodrich Euro rad o
Hair and makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Style
Model-Blu/Elle
Car-1946 Ford Club Coupe

Girl's black wool knit halter top-Twen/Showroom 7
Jewelry-Robert Lee Morris/Artwear
Hair and makeup-Gina Monaci/Visages Style
Man's black velvet shirt-Amanda Lprichard/Living Doll
Models-Bu/Ette and Tony Ward/213 Models
Car-1946 Convertible



OVERHEAD CAMS



Linen american flag shirt-Trash n Vaudeville
Black short army pants-Warbabies, LA
Boots-Roppangi, LA
Models-Tony Ward/213 Models and Stewart/It Model Agency
Car-1932 Ford Roadster



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The Stone Roses have taken Britain's pop world by storm, but they've done it on their own terms.

FOOL'S GOLD

Article by James Brown

The Stone Roses have affected young people in Britain more than any band since the 80s glam-pop era. In fact, they draw their ever-increasing following largely from the disaffected ranks of Duran Duran and Curiosity Killed the Cat fans. Though mass hysteria has yet to break out at their concerts, it's clear that the majority of their fan mail is being written by those in the grips of the Puberty Blues.

The group brings something new and strange to Britain's current music scene: a bright and exciting independence. Rather than slog it out on the traditional tour circuit, The Stone Roses hold one-off performances in unique locations. In 1989 they filled a traditional dance hall in Blackpool, Britain's premier tacky working-class holiday resort, while turning down a slot opening for the Rolling Stones in Canada.

Ian Brown (vocals) and John Squire (guitar) have been friends since junior high school. Musically they were brought up on the Stones, Elvis and the Beatles before running across the Sex Pistols. After five years of cleaning dishes, building models for cartoon sets and intensive dole life, the band were picked up by Silverstone Records. Named after a little-known 1950s spy thriller, The Stone Roses had previously released three independent singles to an audience of goth-rockers but were rarely seen or heard outside their native Manchester.

Over the last 12 months, their blend of pop and funk has brought them impressive success, confounding many music biz elders. The tabloid press had lazily dubbed them "more dull Northerners" before cottoning on to their bizarre fashions and popular music.

Although they exude charisma on stage, Ian and John don't play rock star off it. They are sweet and tender hooligans who admire beauty and will fight anyone who tries to mess with them. They are currently out on bail facing charges of destruction to property and bodily harm after they attacked a former record company's office with paint.

Today is Ian's 24th birthday. Behind him sits a bag full of presents: a huge Oriental puppet; a bottle of brandy; glossy coffee table books about pugilism and New York's subway graffiti, and box after box of chocolates.

The pair are decked out in stomach length nylon waterproof fishing waders. It must be hot in these, but The Stone Roses appear smart and at ease. Before answering questions, Ian gently rolls his head round

his neck like a spaced-out monkey. His huge brown eyes glint from within the gaunt features that recently captured the attention of Sinead O'Connor. John sits hunched beneath his greasy mop top, his voice barely audible over the rustle of his waders.

SPIN: At a time when most bands have their careers shaped for them by managers and record companies, you exercise total control over what you do. Why is that?

John: It's an important relationship. If people want to know what you're doing, what you think, what you sound like, then you should give them it all yourself. You shouldn't have other people doing your sleeves and telling you how your videos should be, dressing you. It should be you, it should be complete.

Ian: You can do exactly what you want. You read about these groups moaning about their record companies, but you don't have to do anything you don't want to do. I've always known that since I was a little kid: you're only here once, do what you feel.

Success makes a lot of bands immensely paranoid.

Ian: Fucking right they are, they're fucked up completely. They should pack it in, because they make spectacles of themselves constantly. It's embarrassing and it's sad. You see them when you watch the telly or read the paper. We don't feel we have to qualify ourselves. Some people want us to because they're really into us and want to know everything about us. We're not trying to make a puzzle.

I don't think we're egotistical. You've got to have a bit of an ego to show off at a live gig. If you don't show off, you don't look good and you're not entertaining.

You've attacked a record company with paint, blown up a BBC TV studio, refused to go on the hippest chat show on television, and you refuse to tour in favor of one-off events. Are you deliberately trying to become notorious?

John: It's just...

Ian: Us. It's what happened to us.

John: It's just the way it is, we don't see it as revolutionary or anything.

How would you feel if people started chucking paint at you at gigs?

John: I'd probably get stuck to my guitar if someone chucked paint at me.

You wouldn't see it as a form of tribute?

Ian: Not if they got it on his best pants, man.

John: We've had lemons chucked at us, sliced and full.

Ian: With messages written on them. I've been hit on the head a few times, but you just carry on. At least it's not bottles or gob.

John: We'll have to put some shit on the next LP sleeve, see if they throw that at us.

Your audiences are very mixed sexually.

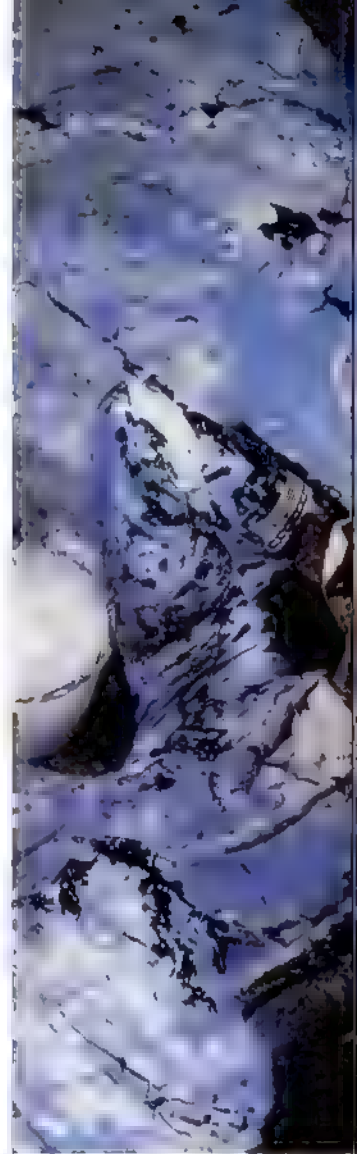
Ian: We used to be called a lads' band. Now we get called a girls' band.

Do you think you're the intelligent teenager's crumpet?

Ian: Dunno, we might be, ha ha ha. If that's all we're worth, then fucking hell, it's all in vain. We've got no responsibility to anyone but ourselves. Someone's gotta be put on a pedestal as sex symbols and it might as well be us.

You're not reaffirming the same rock values as the spandex-trousered crowd.

John: Maybe, I just don't like spandex trousers. The





Kevin Cummins/London Features

average spandex-clad guitarist might be a really nice guy, a feminist even, but I doubt it.

Ian: They're likely to be fueled by pure ego and nothing else, but then it's good fun because you can

"Someone's gotta be put on a pedestal as sex symbols and it might as well be us."—Ian

watch their downfall. I like watching public downfalls. David Bowie: when he came, everybody thought he was from Mars, but then you realize he's just this businessman. Bowie a hero? Oh no, I hate him—useless rubbish. His songs never meant anything to me.

Were you aware of the difference between dance records and rock records when you were growing up?

Ian: No, I think they're the same. "Needle in a

Haystack" was the same as "Anarchy in the UK," "Too Late" by Larry Williams and Guitar Watson was the same as "Janie Jones" by The Clash. A record needs a feel or it's nothing

Do you deliberately create an air of mystery around your lyrics, blur the edges?

John: Do you mean we don't know what we're on about? The records we like ourselves are ones that last because they're not so obvious on the first listen

Ian: Sometimes more direct stuff works really well, it depends how it's done. The *What Goes On* LP by Marvin Gaye works really well because it's him, whereas if Billy Bragg sung those words it'd sound daft. We both do the lyrics. He does a line, I do a line, he does 10 lines, I do one word. We know how to communicate with each other without embarrassment or inhibition. The way to lose inhibitions is to realize that no one's better than yourself. Everyone's capable of it. You don't have to think you're the best, you just have to know that no other person is worth more than yourself. We don't care if our record goes to number one: it doesn't mean anything. It needs more than one group to change things. It needs loads of them. If we give strength to people, that's good.

You've just recorded a 30-minute single. How do you break that down to a six-minute 12-inch?

John: Cut out 24, ha ha ha. The first six minutes are good, then it goes on a bit.

Ian: If just those two tracks were good, then we'd put out a two-track album. Anything's possible, anything at all.

Do you intend to tour America?

Ian: We're not going to get stuck into all that 40-date tour shit, the main reason being that I don't believe anyone's got enough energy to make every gig as good as the last one. It'd just turn you into morons. They're already on the phone every ten minutes saying "Why aren't you coming? Things here are ripping." I'm really looking forward to going over, but in our own time, not just because some high and mighty fat bastard's daughter wants to see us.

John: I don't see it as any sort of rock'n'roll conquest, step up the ladder. I'd rather go to Egypt or Goa or Bali or Thailand.

Ian: That's why we went to Japan before America—because we wanted to go there more.

Did visiting Japan affect your attitude towards Britain?

Ian: It reaffirmed beliefs I had about our culture. Britain's just a little toy town with a lot of people riding on the backs of most people. This stupid Royal Family I can't understand it.

John: It's sexually repressed as well. In Japan women could walk down the streets at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning without being harassed. We didn't see any fights, no one staring at you as you walked down the street.

Ian: The first Tokyo gig was like being in Manchester. We'd been told they'd be quiet and polite and clap between the songs, but they all started dancing as soon as we walked on. For a second we were properly gobsmacked. You go to the other side of the world and 2,000 people are singing along and screaming. That was the most satisfying gig.

Do you think the radical change in British music and the revolutions in Eastern Europe could have been linked with the end of an old decade? People seeing the oncoming 90s as a chance to create cultural and social change?

John: Human beings have realized they can make things change. It's got more to do with having been put down all your life than merely the end of the decade, but that could have something to do with it. There's still time in China: they probably haven't heard much of what's happened in Europe.

Ian: It's positive thinking. Then again, Phil Collins just won British Single of the Year—that song about poor people—so maybe he's got more of a link with it. Did you see his speech? He said, "When you're driving home tonight after the awards in your nice big car, don't look away from them, look at them." That's what he said, ha ha ha. "Look 'em in the eye, and it'll be all right." It's not true. He's so out of touch, his own guilt is fueling him.

John: He should have told them to buy 'em a house.

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Opinion



Jay Bloksberg

What should be done about the media's racist identification of blacks with social problems like crack and family abandonment? Boycott television news and opinion shows says poet and novelist Ishmael Reed.

Column by Ishmael Reed

Edward R. Murrow's broadcasts from Europe provided me with one of my earliest introductions to the modern writing style. His crisp, dramatic narratives brought the war home to thousands of American radio listeners. After witnessing how the Nazi propaganda machine fictionalized reality and used psychological warfare against unpopular groups, Murrow returned to America vowing to prevent such abuses of media power here. Since his death, Murrow has come to epitomize the great journalist. His documentary, "Harvest of Shame," about the oppression of migrant workers, became a model

for the muckraking journalism of the 1960s. Today's muckraker, perhaps working for a think tank financed by the growers, would probably blame the migrant workers' plight on their personal behavior.

I often wonder what Murrow would think of today's media, with its performance-oriented newsmen, docu-dramas, instant analyses and its manipulation by political candidates who are packaged and promoted through media sound bites and guided by media consultants. I wonder what his response would be to a government that manipulates the media so that we may never get all of the facts regarding the Iran-Contra affair, or the invasion of Panama. I wonder what he would think of technology that Joseph Goebbels would find awe-inspiring and that's often used as a weapon against unpopular groups. It's my impression that the media often behave as though blacks are members of an enemy nation and that they, the media, are a propaganda bureau for a nation at war.

For Time Magazine, Gorbachev was the man of the decade. For me it was Willie Horton, the prisoner who committed a rape while he was on furlough from a Massachusetts prison. Mr. Horton seemed to epitomize the image of the black male projected by the media in the 1980s—that of a roving, irresponsible predator. It is clear to me that Bush's Willie Horton ad campaign was successful because it was created after a decade of black male bashing by the mass media. "The enemy wants to do something awful to 'our' women," is a classic image used in war propaganda. An ancestor of this campaign was a famous World War II poster depicting a grinning, sinister, buck-toothed Japanese soldier with a nude European woman slung over his shoulder.

As an African-American, I regularly become angry as I watch the racist stereotypes portrayed on television news. Unlike the print media, where one at least has an opportunity to reply with a letter, it's difficult to document the lies and half-truths that are perpetuated about minorities on the Big Tube—they fly by so fast, and it's far more difficult to challenge them. I find myself diving for sheets of paper, the backs of envelopes, napkins or matchbook covers in order to document these abuses.

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Why are black faces and bodies used to illustrate most social pathologies—illegitimacy, crime, illiteracy, alcoholism, drug addiction, spousal abuse, prostitution, AIDS, family abandonment and abuse of the elderly—when there are millions more whites involved in these activities than blacks?

The media often portray the single black female parent as the source of all the country's poverty problems. Terry K. Adams and Greg J. Duncan challenge

that myth in a paper they wrote for the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center in 1988. They write: "Media images of urban poverty often present households headed by young, never-married black women. . . . Data show that this image does not fit most, or even a substantial minority, of the persistently poor living in urban areas."

NBC News even illustrated a story about a white-collar crime with footage depicting blacks, when blacks usually don't commit white-collar crime of the sort that figured in the savings and loan scandals, scandals that may cost the American taxpayers \$500 billion, many times the \$40 billion spent on welfare and farm subsidies each year.

But of all social "pathologies," none has been attached to blacks in recent years as much as crack—the distribution, possession and addiction to the substance. When several networks did their video montages summarizing the 1980s, whites were shown doing positive things—blacks were shown smoking crack pipes.

Both the government and the media have made crack a black issue, even though its consumption is more prevalent among whites than among blacks. Jack Anderson and others have been reporting on how crack has reached the suburbs and small towns for at least three years now. He says that in many of these white peach-cobbler communities, parents don't know where their children are, but I doubt these parents will be threatened with jail as was a Los Angeles black mother whose sons were engaged in illegal drug activities, nor will middle and upper class pregnant white women who use cocaine be threatened.

George Bush, so as not to embarrass what he views



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as a white middle-class constituency, and his drug czar Willam Bennett continue to portray crack addiction as a black problem, making appearances in black neighborhoods and at institutions that are predominantly black. These appearances are obediently covered by the media. Mr. Bush even went along with the staging of a drug buy from a black dealer so that he could say on television that the crack was bought across the street from the White House.

Hodding Carter, appearing on the David Brinkley show the weekend this strange prank was discovered, said you didn't have to go that far from the White House to buy coke. I wonder if the authorities who go around entrapping black politicians interviewed Hodding Carter for an elaboration of his remark, or if two-way mirrors and hidden cameras are set up in those parties in Georgetown frequented by the political elite, where Fawn Hall said she snorted coke on weekends.

The day after his cynical stunt, Mr. Bush posed with a black crack baby and later he was shown on the site of a public housing project in Alexandria, Virginia.

Will Mr. Bush ever pose with a white cocaine baby? Why doesn't he pose in front of the Los Angeles bank that was found to have raised its profits over 2000 percent in 10 years to total assets of \$10 billion through money laundering, or how about before a gun store that sells sophisticated weapons to black youths, no questions asked. Or on Wall Street, where cocaine sales and distribution were the subjects of a long piece published in the *New York Times*. Or better still, will he ever reveal whether he looked the other way as tons of cocaine were dumped into this country by his anti-communist allies? Or, will anybody in the administration ever explain its ties to Craig Spence, a right-wing socialite who was under investigation by the

secret service and FBI at the time of his death a few months ago? Mr. Spence had been arrested for cocaine possession and weapons charges in New York on August 15th, indicating that the refreshments served to the Washington, DC, establishment at his million-dollar apartment, where he entertained "key officials of the Reagan and Bush administrations, military officers, congressional aides and US and foreign business people with close ties to Washington's political elite," included more than herbal tea.

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And so the administration and the media have successfully used blacks as scapegoats for the crack problem.

The media continued to perpetuate the story that crack is black, even after evidence of widespread cocaine use among whites was supported by a study late last year by the Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education, Inc., which revealed that white teenagers are more prone to drug addiction than are blacks. On

the Sunday, January 13, edition of "This Week With David Brinkley," Mr. Brinkley asked General Clayton Powell about the drug problem as though it were an exclusively inner-city problem.

I decided that something had to be done when I saw one of those pompous, campy, incoherent Roger Rosenblatt essays, carried on the "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour," which associated black youth, as a class, with "evil." This convinced me that television had gone too far. Granted, the alleged attack and rape of a Central Park jogger was cruel, but was this an act on the same level as the Holocaust, the genocide committed by the Khmer Rouge or the Mai Lai massacre as Mr. Rosenblatt suggested? And why accompany an essay about the alleged misdeeds of a few black youth with a graphic depicting a non-specific, dark youthful figure and a commentary about Satanism? And why emphasize the Central Park incident as though it were even worse than those other colossal tragedies? There was a reference to the rape of a disabled child by some middle-class white youth—an event that has since disappeared from public consciousness—that had occurred in New Jersey the week before the commentary, but this was referred to only in passing during Jim Lehrer's introduction to Rosenblatt's essay. And unlike the case of the black youth, no photo of the white youth was shown, another practice of the television networks—concealing the faces of whites who are associated with pathologies.

Unlike the other hit-and-run TV spots that harass black people, I was able to record this commentary on videotape. I showed it to 11 young black professional people a few weeks later, during a meeting about tele-

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vision stereotypes in San Francisco. They were the sort of people who call my generation bitter, but even they agreed with me that something had to be done, and plans for a boycott of television and opinion programs were underway.

You would think commentators and reporters for government-supported television and radio would be less likely to rely on racist stereotypes, but in my monitoring of the media I've found that some of the most careless notions about black life are perpetuated by reporters and commentators on National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System.

Typical was the coverage of blacks by NPR's "Weekend Edition" on Saturday, January 12, and Sunday, January 13, during which there were at least four stories connecting blacks to crack, one about blacks and illiteracy, one about black teenage fathers who abandon their children, and one about homeless blacks, even though most homeless people are white. Sixty percent of the homeless found dead during San Francisco's most recent winter were white males in their forties.

On August 30, 1989, the day the *Times* revealed the extent of cocaine pregnancies among middle-class white women, this shocking story received one line on television news, while the drug addiction of Lawrence Taylor, a black football player, was featured.

Lack of motivation on the part of journalists to dig for the facts accounts in part for the unbalanced view that American audiences receive of black life. One gets the impression that they spend most of their time under the drier, or getting made up or engaging in such lofty decisions as whether to stand or sit down

while delivering the news. I told Mary Beth Grover, who called me to write an article for the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* about whether there was a conspiracy to dump drugs in the black neighborhood—a notion that was treated with sarcasm and incredulity by Lianne Hansen on NPR's "Weekend Edition"—that it was up to the press to discover whether one exists, rather than dismiss the opinion held by large numbers of blacks as being based upon paranoia. Certainly there's far more evidence—some

**White teenagers are more
prone to drug addiction than
are blacks but the media
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of which has appeared in her newspaper—than the quoted lines from "The Godfather": "Let's give it to the [blacks]; they're animals anyway, they're going to lose their souls." And just because those lines were said in a movie doesn't mean that they were untrue. She said that she wanted a ghetto black to say conclusively that there was a white conspiracy. I wasn't her kind of ghetto black, I guess. Howard Kurtz, the journalist who began this debate in *The Washington Post*, erred when he wrote that crack was largely a problem

in black communities. He must be getting all his news from television.

Another reason for the stereotypes of blacks in the white media may be that white journalists find it difficult to divorce themselves from cherished myths about black life even though the facts are right in front of their eyes. I'm constantly amazed that my primitive database—strewn about the room as though some hurricane just blew through, and bookshelves still in disrepair from a recent earthquake—constantly proves to be superior to those of the most sophisticated news-gathering organizations in the world, with millions of dollars' worth of technology at their disposal.

Tom Brokaw seemed jubilant as he celebrated what he called the wresting away of the media by the people from the Communist state in Czechoslovakia. We're not even calling for the wresting away of the media from anybody, and as writers we would be the last to interfere with the First Amendment rights of anybody. We're calling for balance, which is what the minority critics have always called for. Balance. The best and the worst, the brightest and the stupidest, and all gradations in-between, of black, Hispanic and Asian-American life.

When the electronic media, which have the power to topple presidents, arbitrarily, as it turns out, become smug and arrogant and unresponsive to the people, this presents a danger in a democracy. A Reagan appointee even did away with the Fairness Doctrine, which at least pretended to give those with opposing points of view some time to respond to class slander.

If these electronic Leviathans, which have more power than most political institutions, were governments, they would have been toppled long ago.

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Songs (Warner Bros.)
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And Sin (Elektra) 400-598

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Rule (Virgin) 401-893

Kenny G—Kenny G Live
(Arista) 401-505

Taylor Dayne—Can't
Fight Fate (Arista) 388-017

Nick Lowe—Basher The
Best Of Nick Lowe
(Columbia) 400-002

Terence Trent D Arby—
Neither Fish Nor Flesh
(Columbia) 388-728

Joe Cocker—Mad Dogs
And Englishmen (A&M)
389-783

Dwight Yoakam—Just
Lookin' For A Hit
(Reprise) 389-718

Mark Knopfler—Last Exit
To Brooklyn (Warner Bros.) 389-536

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(Columbia) 389-282

Rolling Stones—Steel
Wheels (Rolling
Stones Rec.) 387-738

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The Band—To Kingdom
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Don't Tell A Soul
(Sire/Reprise) 378-927

Kate Bush—The Sensual
World (Columbia) 401-232

Jonathan Richman
(Rounder) 400-861

Ennema—Wild
(Reprise/Sire) 400-820

The Psychedelic Furs—
Book Of Days (Columbia)
400-689

Exene Cervenka—Old
Wives Tales (Rhino)
400-822

Max Q (Atlantic) 400-077

The Residents—The
King And Eye (Enigma)
400-036

Joe Strummer—
Earthquake Weather
(Epic) 400-010

Gloria Estefan—Cuts
Both Ways (Epic)
382-341

Tom Petty—Full Moon
Fever (MCA) 382-184

Melissa Etheridge—
Brave And Crazy
(Island) 388-090

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
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(Epic) 382-368

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Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Laurie Anderson—
Strange Angels
(Warner Bros.) 389-940

Vitamin Z—Sharp Stone
Rein (Geffen) 389-601

Ian McCulloch—
Candleland
(Sire/Reprise) 389-593

David Byrne—Real Momo
(Sire) 389-494

The Mighty Lemon Drops
—Laughter (Reprise)
389-478

Red Hot Chili Peppers—
Mother's Milk (EMI)
389-205

Sugarcubes—Here
Today, Tomorrow, Next
Week (Elektra) 388-900

Big Audio Dynamite—
Megatop Phoenix
(Columbia) 388-215

The Cure—
Disintegration (Elektra)
382-093

Gloria Estefan—Cuts
Both Ways (Epic)
382-341

Tom Petty—Full Moon
Fever (MCA) 382-184

Melissa Etheridge—
Brave And Crazy
(Island) 388-090

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
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(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

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Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

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(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368

Warrant—Dirty Rotten
Filly Sinking Rich
(Columbia) 379-644

Paula Abdul—Forever
Your Girl (Virgin) 374-637

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

Richard Marx—Repeat
Offender (EMI) 380-915

Ziggy Marley & The
Melody Makers—One
Bright Day (Virgin)
388-987

The Best Of The O'Jays—
Divided We Stand
(Arista) 388-979

Babyface—Tender Love
(Solar/Epic) 388-177

Steve Stevens Atomic
Playboys (Warner Bros.)
386-086

Anderson Bruford,
Weckman Howe (Arista)
384-115

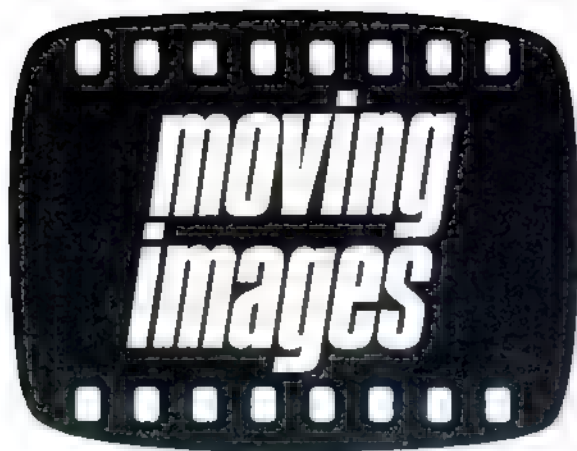
Tin Machine (EMI)
383-976

Jeff Beck (Epic) 380-303

Tracy Chapman—
Crossroads (Elektra)
387-951

Bad English (Epic) 383-463

Alice Cooper—Trash
(Epic) 382-368



THIS IS AMERICA

Connoisseur of Trash

Article by Scott Cohen

John Waters films have no message and are without socially redeeming value. Fortunately, his latest film, "Cry-Baby," starring Johnny Depp, is no exception.

The moment of truth came on a Saturday afternoon in Baltimore, 1971, when Divine, the 300-pound homicidal drag queen and star of John Waters' "Pink Flamingos," stooped down on the sidewalk and ate dog shit. It was surreal. It was magical! It left an audience that thought it had seen everything gagging in the aisles.

It wasn't the best scene John had ever written, nor was it Divine's best performance, but it's more famous than anything either has ever done. No doubt it will be included in Waters' obituary. It certainly was in Divine's. John's only regret was that no passerby happened to see this overweight man in a skintight cocktail dress and high-heels eat dog

shit off the street for real. Afterwards Divine said, "Now I know I'm insane," and brushed his teeth—just what anyone would do.

Bad taste is what John Waters is all about. He used to say if someone vomits watching one of his films, it's like getting a standing ovation. His films were nauseating, but in a creative way. Although his films still have the same sensibility, he never tried to outgross "Pink Flamingos"—as if anyone could.

John is fascinated by the periods in history just before something big happened. "Hairspray" preceded the civil rights movement in the 60s, and "Cry-Baby," his eighth feature, to be released this month, precedes rock'n' roll. It's a musical-comedy about a juvenile delinquent from the wrong side of the tracks who meets a rich girl whose parents own a charm school. A combination of her raging hormones and the evil influences of rockabilly music lure her to gang worship. Instead of shock, "Cry-Baby" is based on irony: the drapes—Baltimore and Philadelphia slang for juvenile delinquents in the late 1940s, early 50s—are the good guys and the normal people are the villains. "Cry-Baby" is a spoof on "Hot Rod Girls," "High School Confidential," "Girls Town," "Untamed Youth" and other cheesy juvenile delinquent movies from the 50s.

John was too young to be a drape, but he knew they were everything his parents hated. They were the pop fashion statement before there were pop fashion statements and the first fashion statement in his lifetime. Before then, men usually didn't dress like peacocks. Drapes wore long iridescent sport coats, pink and charcoal-gray sweaters, pants that were baggy at the top and peg-legged with turquoise stripes up the side, Mr. B collars, pointy-toe shoes, and the greased DA hairdo. Girls wore long skintight skirts with bobby sox and black ballet shoes, skintight sweaters with pointy tits, head scarves with their hair in pin curls, pale liquid makeup and, every once in a while, tattoos. Drapes listened to black music like "Annie Had a Baby," which was never played on the radio. They hung out in pool rooms and on abandoned roads near airports where they drag-raced. They drove Hudson Hornets with mud flaps and suicide knobs. The thing that impressed John most about drapes is that when the guy pushed in the clutch, the drapette would shift. It pisses him off that he didn't know about that in time to put it in the movie

In "Cry-Baby," Johnny Depp plays Wade "Cry-Baby" Walker; Amy Locane, who appeared with Beastie Boy Adam Horowitz in "Lost Angels," plays the girl, and Stephen Mailer, Norman Mailer's son, plays the girl's "square" boyfriend. Others in the cast include Ricki Lake, who starred in "Hairspray," as Cry-Baby's sister who's always pregnant, and ex-porn queen Traci Lords, a teenage girl whose body grew up before she did. Joey Heatherton, Joe D'Allesandro, Patty Hearst, David

Nelson from "Ozzie and Harriet," Mink Stoll and Troy Donahue are the gang's parents. Iggy Pop, Susan Tyrrell and Polly Bergen play grandparents. It's everyone Waters ever wanted to cast in a movie except Lana Turner, his favorite living person. "She's the only real movie star around. There are still some from her period that are alive, but they don't have that scary legend about them. She's from an era when they really had movie stars, when you were told who to go out with and you wouldn't leave the house unless you were completely dressed. Every move you made was false, which is great."

As a teenager, John made a point of seeing all the trashy movies the sisters at Sunday school said he'd go to hell if he saw, especially "Baby Doll," which was worse than killing the Pope. He'd sneak to a hill near his home with a pair of binoculars and watch the "adults only" horror films on a distant drive-in screen. He'd clip all the violent movie ads from *Variety* and, pretending he owned a movie theater, book the most hideous films. His goal in life, even then, was to make the trashiest motion picture in history.

"I always wanted to make movies but never thought I could until I saw underground movies in New York, especially George and Mike Kuchar's and the early Warhols. Then I saw 'Scorpio Rising' and I was obsessed. That's when I realized you didn't need \$40 million to make a film. But I had no idea how to make a movie. I learned from doing it. The first one I made was 'Hag in a Black Leather Jacket,' in 1954, when I was a senior in high school."



One day, while walking home from school, John met a girl mowing the lawn who would change his life. He was immediately drawn to her bleached-white bubble hairdo turned green from chlorine in swimming pools. She introduced him to her circle of friends, who later became the nucleus of the Dreamland repertory group he used in his films. He was thrilled to meet them. He was sick of being a bad influence on others and craved people that could be a bad influence on him.

One of the worst influences on him was an extremely effeminate guy named Glenn whose upper middle-class parents owned a nursery school. John and his father would see this person with different-color hair every day on the corner waiting for the bus. Every time they saw him, John's father would shudder, so John just had to meet him. Later John changed Glenn's name to Divine.

Glenn became a hairdresser specializing in ridiculous, complicated bouffant hairdos, but suffered so badly from a chronic case of party fever that he quit his job and consumed vast amounts of junk food. He really needed some show business to pull him out of his depression. When John decided to make "Mondo Trasho," his first feature-length film, he knew Divine would be the perfect blonde bombshell for the starring role.

After "Mondo Trasho," and right before "Pink Flamingos," John made "Multiple Maniacs," a hard-edged film in which Divine rips out the heart of her husband and eats it and threatens Ronald Reagan's life—and he was just the governor of California then. That was really hippie times, although Divine was hardly a hippie. The film was made to make hippies nervous.

Contrary to popular belief, Divine was not a transvestite. He actually hated being in drag, which he referred to as his "work clothes." He only wore them for a play, movie or personal appearance. Divine was just your typical actor who got cast as a woman. "I'm satisfied with my natural plumbing," he used to say, and often referred to himself as "shim." He would have been in "Cry-Baby," but he always had a problem breathing in his sleep and one night he went to sleep and died. The last movie he made was "Hairspray." John says he wouldn't consider using another man in a woman's role. "Nobody can ever replace Divine, and I wouldn't want anybody to think I'm trying."

If John Waters could change places for a moment with anyone in the world it would be with a normal man with three kids living in suburbia who likes doing things around the house.

The only real job John ever had in his life

was taking Gallup surveys as a teenager, but since nobody let him into their house, he made up all the answers. "They gave us these fake ads, which we had to iron into real magazines, go to somebody's house and say 'would you read this magazine and I'll come back tomorrow'—you had to go there twice—and ask them if they remembered this ad. If they did, you had to ask them a thousand questions about it. Of course I'm so bad mechanically, the ads I'd ironed in would fall out. It was so obvious."

He could have run his father's fire equipment supply company. He worked there for one single day. Fire is about the only fixation he and his father have in common. As a kid, whenever they'd hear the sirens, they'd race off together after the fire trucks. His fondest memories of his father are of the two of them standing together watching a neighbor's house burn to the ground.

Before he quit smoking a few months ago, John went through 3 1/2 packs of Kools a day for 25 years. He used to eat just so he could enjoy a cigarette afterwards. He used to smoke while swimming. The last thing he ate before getting a stop-smoking shot was a cigarette. "I coughed constantly, and a member of my family had a brain tumor and that kind of scared me. But my advice to you is don't quit."

Besides being a director and author, John Waters is also a successful stand-up comedian. He's used the exact same 56-minute routine on his college lecture tour for the past 15 years. He comes out, says hello and opens with: "Could you imagine Stanley Kubrick doing this?—laugh—My fantasy is to sing Barbra Streisand's 'People' to you in pig latin, so I think I will. [Sings the first verse.] I wish I could continue the whole song and make direct eye contact with every one of you until you're squirming in your seats, wishing you were home watching 'Leonard Part VI' in slow motion on your VCR."

"Doing that for years," says John, "came in handy when I'd pitch my films to executives. It used to be the studio wanted to see my old stuff and then they'd flip out when they saw it. Now, in the last two years, there's a new breed of executives who my films don't horrify. They've seen them in college themselves. They don't want me to make one like that, but they know that I'm going to. That's the joke; I can make movies like 'Hairspray' and 'Cry-Baby' that are basically still the same, but don't scare people. The sense of humor is the same and I'm glorifying everything I'm for, but I've turned things around so I can play in malls, where people have never seen anything like them. I make humorous trash, and that's what I'm trying to do well."



"The Tall Guy"

Directed by Mel Smith

"The Tall Guy" is the latest tiny, intriguing British comedy to crawl ashore here, gasp for air and expire in a week or two. "Getting It Right" was released twice without getting it right, and the remarkably precise "The Rachel Papers" only surfaced on video, but "The Tall Guy" may fare better, if only because it's been sweetened by an American sort of star, Jeff Goldblum. There's nothing groundbreaking about it, and if you're cynical, it'll probably make you more so, but if you're up for a wry, po-faced romance, it's very good stuff indeed.

As Dexter King, an out-to-lunch American actor in London, Goldblum wanders around in a contented dodo trance; if Dexter cared at all, he'd be a loser, but he doesn't, and that makes him immortal. He plays straight-man to a shrimp comedian in a hit West End show, simply standing still as the butt of the humor night after night. His catatonia is finally remedied by a sudden, irrational passion for Kate Lemon, a prim young nurse played with upper lip at full mast by Emma Thompson. Dexter chases her for half the movie, and you're beginning to get fed up with his putzomasochism when the nurse takes a second look, grins and jumps his bones. It's like finding out that Julie Andrews has a randy, eccentric side.

The movie gets sillier while managing to hold its charm: Goldblum loses his job, but wins the lead in an extremely bad musical version of "The Elephant Man" (called, what else, "Elephant!"). The screenwriters work up a sweat trying to keep suspense in the relationship—Dexter messes with the leading lady, Kate leaves him, Dexter begs her to

come back—but the contortions aren't necessary: you're having a good enough time watching these two simply connect. "The Tall Guy" is the kind of movie you want to praise very quietly, because high expectations would make it seem flat and coy. It never transcends its genre—Oddballs in Love—but that's both its weakness and the source of its strength.

—Ty Burr

"The Handmaid's Tale"

Directed by Volker Schlöndorff

It's hep and easy to say that as Eastern Europe loosens up, our fair nation is becoming more and more like a fascist state. But "The Handmaid's Tale," a semi-futuristic fable about an America turned toxic and fundamentalist, makes a convincing case for a dismally repressive tomorrow. If former Romanian party head Nicolae Ceausescu could force his country's women to forego birth control and become baby machines, who's to say our own right wing won't similarly patrol bodies (and minds) by 2000?

Fans of the Margaret Atwood novel on which Volker Schlöndorff's film is based (with a script by Harold Pinter, that master of disengagement and paranoia) may find this adaptation too lightweight. But no one can fault the casting.

"The Handmaid's Tale" is riddled with implausibilities, not the least of which is its phony, tagged-on ending. But as a cautionary parable about autocracy, it's a positive mind tool. Atwood's fictional nightmare reminds us that an overregulated tomorrow is as close as our apathy allows it to be.

—Katherine Dieckmann

VIDEO REWIND

"Second Sight" (Warner Home Video) would appear to be perfect brain-death no-cal comedy: it stars John Larroquette and Bronson Pinchot, two TV hacks who are generally funnier than they have any right to be, as well as Stuart Pankin, a hard-working fat guy who's never been as funny as he ought to be. The three run a Boston psychic detective agency, with John as the hard-boiled front, Bronson the spacey psychic and Stuart as... the hard-working fat guy. First mistake is having a nun for the love interest. Second mistake is the plot: there isn't one. Third mistake is the sub-Stooges (Moe, not Iggy) dialogue—flaccid banter interspersed with farts and gunplay. Fourth mistake is setting this mess in my hometown. Only in movies like this (and the even more *verschunken* "Physical Evidence") do Boston cops talk like they've never heard of Southie.

Another big disappointment is the mirthless "Erik the Viking" (Orion),

written and directed by Monty Python's usually reliable Terry Jones. Like "Holy Grail" and "Life of Brian" (which Jones also directed), "Erik" painstakingly recreates a grubby period of history, then populates it with whining, petulant, small-minded Englishmen. Unfortunately, the Brits are in the background here and an American actor, Tim Robbins ("Bull Durham") takes what by rights should have been the late Graham Chapman's role, as Erik the existential Viking. Robbins doesn't have a clue about Python timing, and shoddy editing leaves the whole thing earthbound. Two-thirds in, "Erik" changes to standard, perfectly watchable adventure fare, but it's already too late: they've wasted John Cleese's cameo.

Speaking of spew, if you haven't learned to keep away from the boys at Troma, I can't help you. Even their so-called hits, "The Toxic Avenger" and its sequels, have great titles, half-assed ideas and zip else—no budgets, no acting, no sets. Their latest, "Stuff Stephanie in the Incinerator" (Media), is a lame "Most Dangerous Game" ripoff, shot in somebody's suburban home with student-film lighting and lousy pacing. For the record, none of the three characters are named Stephanie and no one gets stuffed in an incinerator. Troma doesn't care that you can't make a bad movie on purpose, and that makes them

seem all the more like unbearably smug poseurs.

On the other hand, no one makes bad movies as deliriously entertaining as Tobe Hooper, whose career continues its spectacular downhill slide with "Spontaneous Combustion." The man who reached a genre peak with "The Texas Chain Saw Massacre" and a commercial peak with "Poltergeist" now offers this completely incoherent tale of David Bell (twitichingly played by Brad Dourif), the son of a couple subjected to radiation experiments in the 50s. Apparently the tests lower the human body's immunity to perfectly natural spontaneous combustion, or, in the words of the German scientist with the eyepatch: "Ze human body iss ze most complex electrically sparked combustion engine ve know uf." That means that whenever things get tense, Brad spouts flames from his elbow. He can also make enemies burn up over the phone. "Spontaneous Combustion" is a lot of fun. It's got far too many subplots, a nice sense of paranoia, effects that are both icky and ridiculous, and it moves too fast for logic. Beat that, Troma.

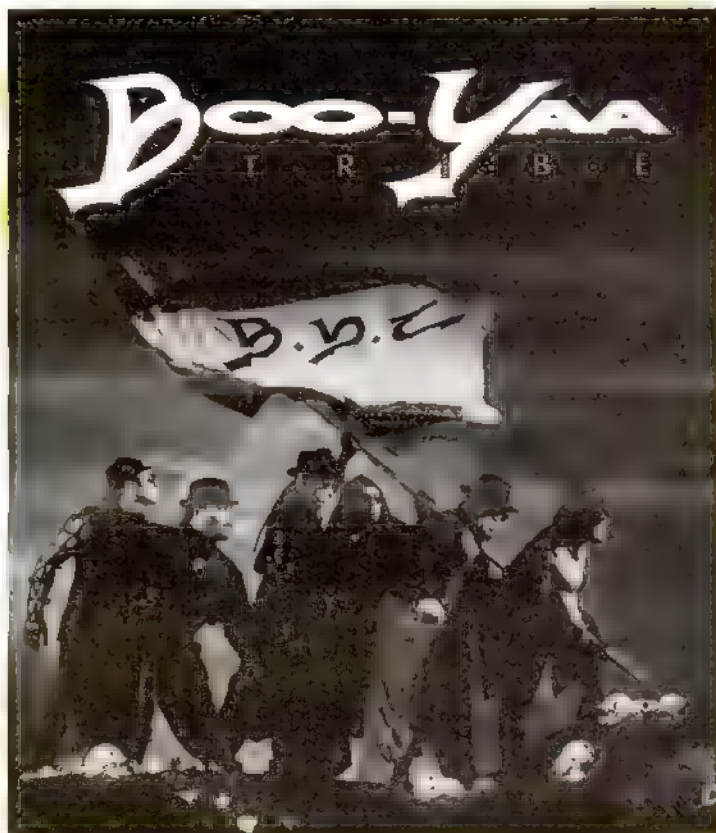
The 90 minutes of "Film Crash: The Movie," by New York filmmakers' collective Film Crash, includes "Two Boneheads" (reviewed last month) and four other shorts, all of them worthwhile for fans of off-off-Hollywood weirdness. Su-



Terry Jones's mirthless "Erik the Viking," edited, apparently, by Thron, the Great Axeman, but ignored by the remainder of the Norse Pantheon.

sie Klein's "Off the Roof" and Ruth Peyser's "Covered in Fleas" are brief animations—one dreamlike, the other squalid and pointed. "The Man Who Invented the Twinkie," by Karl Nussbaum and Scott Saunders, is an odd bit of twin-universe surrealism, with brilliant shoe-string production and a script that must have played better on paper. The prize of the bunch is Peter Mark D'Auria's "Mother of Wolves," a hallucinatory junkie-dream that, despite a big debt to "Eraserhead" and an ending that's too literal, has incredible power. Film Crash's motto is "Brains Over Budget," which stands in opposition to any other movie you can think of. (Available for \$27.50 postpaid from Film Crash, 160 East Third St., New York, NY 10009.)

—Ty Burr



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AIDS

WORDS FROM THE FRONT

AIDS Inc. author John Rappoport details how the high profits of medical research—\$5 billion—have proven deadly for thousands of AIDS sufferers.

Interview by John Rappoport

"I asked a researcher how they could continue to give AIDS patients interferon, when it had such clear immunosuppressive properties. He said, 'Well, the drug companies had such unsold stocks of recombinant interferon, and that would make the annual shareholders' happy event!'"

Dr. Joseph Sonnabend
Former Editor AIDS Research

"We like to imagine that each medical puzzle ultimately yields its solution to a sober group of men who stand around in white coats in a serene lab. Under good overhead lighting, they deal in rational phrases and shake test tubes. Nothing personal."

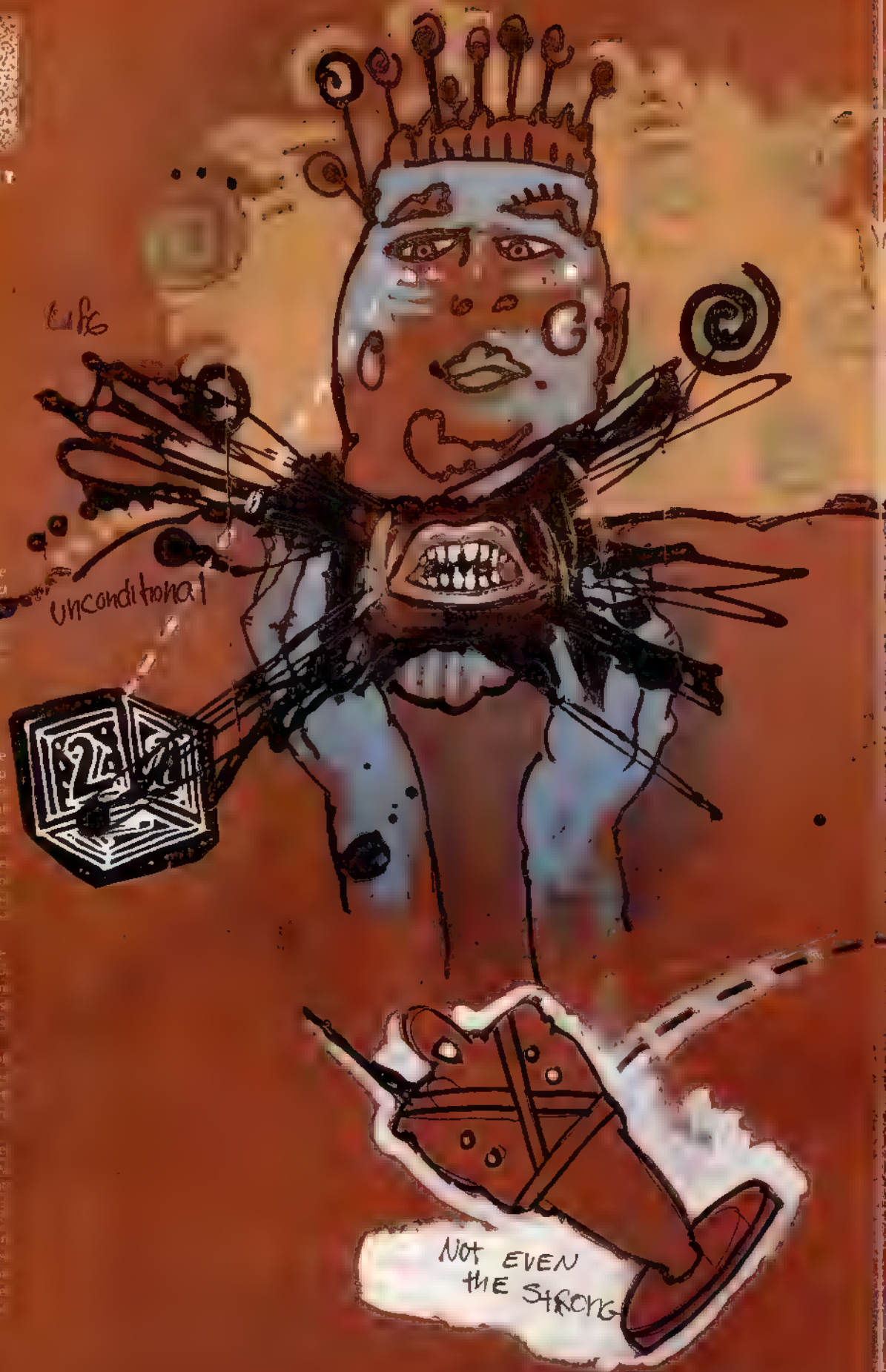
The reality is that when we talk about AIDS we are also talking about business. And men in white lab coats are restless about getting their piece of a substantial \$5 billion research pie. For some, the research has led to profitable cottage industries.

Asparand, for instance, is a book series. Yehoram Hazazeline and Max Essex have contributed frequently to the debate over the cause of AIDS. Both also own shares of a company that manufactures diagnostic kits that test for AIDS based solely on the theory that HIV is the cause of the disease.

At Maryland's sprawling National Institutes of Health—home base for world AIDS research and depository for the bulk of US federal funding—Robert Gallo, co-discoverer of HIV, owns patent rights on that virus.

Jim Warner, a Reagan senior policy analyst at the White House who was assigned to study AIDS policy, told SPIN he was very frustrated with the scientists at NIH who were heading the federal war on the disease.

"I'm appalled at [their] conceit and arrogance," Warner said. "These guys assume AIDS is their show. They just assume it. They told me that [Berkeley molecular biologist] Peter Duesberg's refutation of HIV as the cause of AIDS has been discounted by the scientific community. I was given no explanation of



why. I was offended. I'm an intelligent person: I can understand the logic behind a scientific argument. No evidence was presented to me. I wanted it. They refused to discuss it. They just said that Duesberg had been 'discounted.' That's absurd. It's not scientific to dismiss Duesberg as a crank."

The tremendous criticism that Peter Duesberg has taken from colleagues stems in part from his asking them to think the unthinkable—that HIV may not be the cause of AIDS. The entire structure of the AIDS industry is constructed around this assumption—from field researchers who show up in African towns with HIV test kits, to biologists in labs from Boston to Paris, to corporate technicians who manufacture experimental vaccines and AIDS drugs like AZT, to scientists with business interests in HIV.

Outside of these closed circles there are alternative treatment practitioners who make towering claims and produce a smattering of long-term AIDS survivors. Some researchers who don't toe the party line may interview these survivors and their practitioners. No "important" researcher from the orthodox medical community, however, seriously considers that they have beaten AIDS. To concede this would be to give up the idea that HIV equals AIDS—a concept that has created the single "magic bullet" approach to AIDS treatment. It is on this approach that the National Institutes of Health have focused all of its efforts. In 10 years, this research effort has shown little or no success. As a result, potentially lifesaving and relatively inexpensive treatments are casually locked out of the high-tech, big business world of the AIDS establishment.

The bottom line is that control of federal AIDS monies belongs to researchers and bureaucrats like Robert Gallo, at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and Anthony Fauci, at the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). These men and their close associates are occasionally called, by colleagues, the AIDS Mafia.

"It's a whole new ballgame with AIDS," says one mid-level researcher in Washington. "A few researchers control the important funds. They make the discoveries—that is, the official, approved ones."

"And there are unofficial discoveries?"

"All over the place. Read the medical journals. A lot of interesting stuff goes into the dustbin. We're mid-level researchers. We have no status."

Inside the AIDS industry, many mid-level researchers hustling on the slopes of the hierarchy do get funding, but not significant funding. They do studies, publish in respectable journals, but their findings don't make their way into official AIDS dogma. Instead, these scientists are tolerated, paid and in the long run, ignored. Still, they have important things to say about what AIDS is and isn't.

In 1984, Peter Walzer published a study in *Infection and Immunity* which explored the possibility that antibiotics, in conjunction with other factors, can increase a disposition toward *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), the primary cause of death among people with AIDS. In studies, Walzer found that animals "administered corticosteroids, a low-protein diet, and tetracycline spontaneously developed *P. carinii* pneumonia within [approximately] 8 weeks...." No microbe necessary.

Well, as a matter of fact, in US urban AIDS populations, the combined use of corticosteroids (as anti-inflammatory drugs), the abuse of antibiotics and malnutrition are sometimes seen together in the same

patient. But Walzer's research has gone nowhere.

Environmental, rather than viral, causes have received little attention from the AIDS establishment. Several reporters have heard Robert Gallo scream that there are no environmental factors in AIDS. "HIV is all you need!"

Harry Haverkos, at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, has done important work on inhalant nitrates (poppers), street drugs that may be linked to the appearance of Kaposi's sarcoma, a cancer often diagnosed in AIDS patients.

"The proven potential for cancer causing nitrosamine in bacon, for example," says Haverkos, "is probably one-millionth of the dose from inhalation of poppers."

Africa could become a permanent "AIDS subsidiary" of a huge worldwide health industry—an "AIDS multinational."

Although heavy popper use has been noted among people diagnosed with AIDS since 1981, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has not seen fit to push major research or an information-campaign on the drug, which in most of the country can still be purchased over the counter. Haverkos's work has so far been ignored.

In 1987, Douglas Dietrich of the New York Medical Center raised questions about the significance of low T-cell counts in making a diagnosis of AIDS. He reported that he had tracked patients with immune T-cell counts of 10 (compared to a healthy person's count of 500-1,500 T-cells) for a year, "and nothing [bad] happened to them."

Other researchers have joined Dietrich in doubting the key clinical tag given to T-cells. But the doubt has not traveled to the top of the research mountain where most Congressional monies are deposited. Why? Possibly because at the summit, the original image of AIDS still holds—that HIV destroys T-cells and so inevitably kills people.

Other studies showing the presence in AIDS patients of adenoviruses, cytomegalovirus and a new mycoplasma that causes AIDS-like symptoms and death in animals have not gained close attention—even though these germs were more heavily concentrated in patients and much easier to detect than HIV.

Nor has anyone of importance resurrected the traditional body of literature, which indicates that in the Third World the so-called AIDS clinical picture (including T-cell depletion) has possibly existed for decades and is caused by severe malnutrition.

Were the AIDS bureaucracy solely dedicated to a cure, these "second string" research findings would be elevated, perhaps through a special internal NIH committee, to serious consideration. But that is not happening. Instead, as in a multinational corporation, the watchword of the AIDS establishment is *grow*, despite any internal doubts or divergent AIDS paradigm. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the areas of HIV testing and Third World AIDS.

The manufacture of HIV test kits has become big business. In 1989, 1.2 million Elisa tests were administered to Americans to detect contact with HIV, the reputed cause of AIDS. To those who

tested positive—and there are no figures available on this number—Western blot tests were given. For more than a dozen companies licensed by the FDA to manufacture these test kits—at an average consumer price of \$40—business is expanding.

But, from the earliest days of these tests, beginning in 1985, important researchers have published and reported on their gross inaccuracies. In the July-August, 1985, issue of *Transfusion*, researcher Paul Holland recounts the case of 1,280 blood donors who were tested for HIV with Elisa test kits from two different manufacturers. The Abbott Elisa came up with 20 positive results. In repeat-exam, with Abbott Elisas, only 5 stayed positive. On this same group of 1,280, an ENI Elisa was then used. The ENI Elisa found 25 positive specimens, and on retest, 14 stayed positive. Only three donors were positive on Elisas from both companies. Finally, none of the Elisas were confirmed positive by a back-up Western blot test.

In March, 1987, James Carlson published a paper in the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*, which indicated that the Elisa test could falsely appear to read positive, but would not really be positive (for various reasons) in a staggering number of cases. In low-risk groups, the false-positive rate on Elisa tests was "84.2 percent in our study and 77.1 percent recently reported by the American Red Cross," Carlson stated.

Earlier, in January, 1987, L.J. Oldham expressed similar reservations about the Western blot test, which is often cited as a final backup to correct for mistakes in the Elisa: "... [The] Western blot ... lacks full sensitivity and specificity," Oldham wrote in the *Journal of Medical Virology*. [HIV] confirmatory procedures are at present beyond the scope of most screening laboratories."

In 1988, Dr. Harvey Fineberg, Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, made a devastating projection of inaccuracies that would turn up in mass screening with the Elisa test. Fineberg found that about 90 percent of the test results that appeared to be positive would in fact be completely false.

Yet the powers-that-be at the US CDC have ignored these projections and other research that supports them. Two key researchers at the CDC, Peter Drotman and Harold Jaffe, initially insisted that the Elisa and Western blot were good tests ("as good as other tests," Jaffe said somewhat cryptically) when interviewed by SPIN. But in the next breath, Jaffe and Drotman admitted problems with the Western blot. Jaffe said that variance between Elisas manufactured by different companies had been a greater problem early on—but he conceded that there is still "some variance" among them.

Other practicing MDs I spoke with had never read easily accessible journal papers that point to serious problems in HIV testing. There is no public or scientific debate on this issue. The testing part of the AIDS industry continues to roll on, makes tens of millions of dollars each year and blithely ignores counter-evidence to its product claims. ("We believe the tests are very accurate," several press information people at pharmaceutical houses told me blandly.)

In the Third World, dire AIDS predictions have cemented the idea of a global plague that is going to kill us all. These predictions have helped shake loose large amounts of money from public coffers to finance research—carried out by the same people, basically, who made the dire predictions in the first place. And by the same people who so far have failed to supply any real medical answers for people who are dying.

To conclude that countries like Uganda, and perhaps all of Africa, are going under from AIDS is at least poorly supported by data, and quite possibly entirely false.

In Geneva, in 1987, some World Health Organization medical people predicted close to 100 million cases of AIDS in Africa by the early 1990s. One of the countries most often cited as a hotbed of AIDS is Uganda, where about 7,400 cases of the disease have been reported.

My first surprise was that most scientists I contacted who had been there refused to talk on the record. The reasons seemed to be connected to possible loss of grant money (if they spoke against prevailing plague predictions). The other factor could have been embarrassment in Uganda about the whole subject of AIDS. People diagnosed with the disease in that country reportedly are treated as pariahs, even sent from their homes by family.

Aside from medical journals, my sources were several Ugandan researchers and diplomats, and an American biologist who spent a summer touring the country.

Predictions of a global plague that is going to kill us all have shaken loose large amounts of money from public coffers to finance research—carried out by the same people, basically, who made the dire predictions in the first place.

The first fact of importance was obvious. Under a decade of rule by Idi Amin, and during a civil war, the health system of the nation collapsed. Throughout the 70s, doctors left Uganda in droves. Clinics were destroyed. In hospitals, a shortage of needles led to their multiple, repeated use. Microbes were passed from patient to patient, causing a variety of infections.

Two scientists who believe in the basic efficacy of AIDS blood testing told SPIN that HIV testing in the country is very poorly run, and went on to concede that even they find false-positive results ranging from 17 to 40 percent.

This would render AIDS blood tests meaningless as a way of establishing a connection between HIV and local illness. The confusion and lack of data is worsened by the fact that no post mortems are done on victims of any disease in Uganda.

There is ample opportunity in the chaos of Uganda's health care system to misdiagnose various conditions as a new disease called AIDS. Sanitation is very poor in the country, and perhaps only a quarter of the people have toilets. Various diseases in Uganda are on the upswing, including malaria (which some scientists believe also causes a false-positive reading on an AIDS blood test), a venereal infection called ulcerating chancroid and a tick-borne relapsing fever that has escalated since a main highway along which ticks gather has been ruined in the civil war, forcing people to walk instead of drive. All of these diseases can pres-

ent the simple clinical picture of AIDS: poor immune response plus multiple opportunistic infections.

In addition, brucellosis, a disease passed on to humans by cows, has been on the rise near new dairy farms. Two researchers, DKG Ndyabattinduka and IH Chu, found that brucellosis was more widespread than imagined and was being misdiagnosed in hospitalized patients as malaria and other chronic infections. Its symptoms are fatigue, fever, sweating and muscle pains, which, taken together, are described in other literature as the first indications of slim disease—the local name for AIDS.

Debilitating diarrhea, a symptom also attributed to Ugandan AIDS, was found in a long-term study of 30,000 hospitalized patients at a Ugandan hospital to have been present in 1,000 patients admitted between 1951 and 1978. Obviously this key symptom has been endemic in the country long before the 1985 "discovery" of Slim AIDS.

The first naming of Ugandan AIDS, by researcher D. Serwadda in an October, 1985, *Lancet* article, contains a very odd coincidence. After listing the symptoms as malaise, fevers, loss of appetite, diarrhea (severe vomiting and stomach cramps have also been attributed), Serwadda states that the typical local AIDS patient is known to have dosed himself early on with medical drugs, among which are chloroquine and chloramphenicol. A cursory reading of health manuals such as Lippincott's *Drug Factors and Comparisons*, indicates that the side-effects of these two drugs include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps and loss of appetite, all "AIDS" symptoms.

Serwadda never rules out his research-subjects having suffered the strong side-effects of medications taken while in an immune-deficient state. But he does mention that as early as 1962, an aggressive Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS) was seen in Uganda. Other medical literature indicates that throughout "AIDS-territory" in Africa, several types of KS have existed for decades, not necessarily related to the type found in cities like San Francisco and New York.

The principal link supposedly proving AIDS to be a worldwide phenomenon—in the US and Africa—was the nearly simultaneous appearance of KS in both areas in 1980.

To go one step further, a recent observation in *Lancet*, which was reported in *The New York Times* and *LA Times*, indicates that KS has never been shown to be caused by HIV.

The earliest AIDS-related journeys to Africa undertaken by American scientists, during which they did a small number of HIV blood tests, led them to extrapolate monstrous numbers of AIDS cases to come on the continent. These numbers have now been challenged by researchers in Germany, who believe that the tests were badly done and yielded massive false-positive results.

In Africa, and throughout the Third World, e.g., in Haiti, real and obvious public health catastrophes are advancing on populations. They stem from unsanitary living conditions, a lack of food, no health care, civil wars and epidemics of malaria and cholera. In a number of African nations, famine is caused by poor distribution of food, not just droughts. In many of these nations, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans support cash crops, such as cotton and tobacco, for export—a practice that enriches an elite few. By diverting a small percentage of the food they now grow for export, these countries

Continued on page 96

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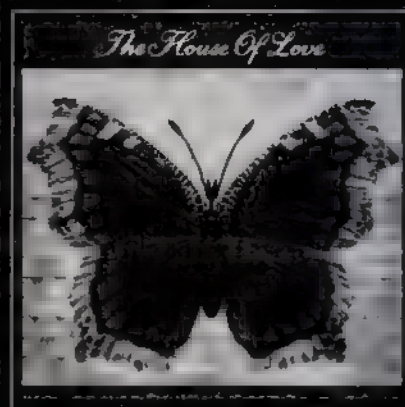


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Tony! Toni! Toné! Revival Wing/PolyGram

Edited by
Karen Schoemer
and Jim Greer

There's a track on Tony! Toni! Toné!'s first album, *Who?*, called "Born Not To Know," a butt ticklin' chicken-and-waffles groove that opened with some words of wisdom from "Grandma" (which recall the humorous banter heard on the Ohio Players' 1971 "Funky Worm"). "Born" percolates with a message about today's generation of new jack youngsters, equally ignorant of the cultural/political history of yesteryear and the hardcore blues/soul music that was the soundtrack to that history.

On their second Wing album, *Revival*, the Oakland threesome fancy themselves born to know; their mission is to spread the sound, if not the word. Lyrical ally they don't fool around much with

social commentary or political posturing. Their purpose is the preservation of R&B's signature, the perpetuation of the soul tradition, and—on the lighter side—the glorification of barbecue, the boogaloo and the booty on a Saturday night.

Revival begins with the grave directive, "Play this record as frequently as possible. Then, as it becomes easier for you, play the record once a day, or as needed." This is apt advice, 'cause *Revival* doesn't sink its hooks in on first listen.

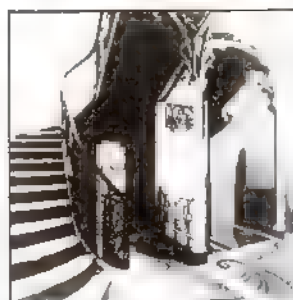
Raphael Ray Wiggins, Dwayne Wiggins and Timothy Christian make *Revival* come alive by dipping into a trick bag of various musical influences—Parliament, Duke Ellington, Pointer Sisters, James Brown, among others. Almost every tune is embellished with an allusion, an imitation or an out-and-out sample. Their worldview and personal style, part

Tony! Toni! Tone (l-r): Raphael Ray Wiggins, Timothy Christian and Dwayne Wiggins.

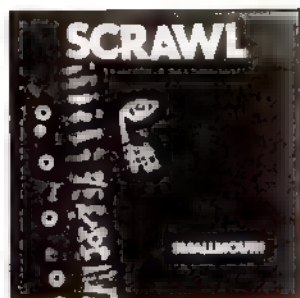
New Edition, part Ohio Players, with a dose of the Jetsons and the Cosby kids for good measure, results in music that is soul-soaked and hip-hop-wise, cool, urban and youthful. As on *Who?*, the Ton-yies' songwriting transforms the simplest ditties into jammin' anthems that assault the ear and move the feet.

"The Blues," the leadoff single, is a slammin' complaint to a dissatisfied lover, a confection of pounding bass, a James Brownish all-out break and Jackson 5 "Dancin' Machine" doowop doo-doo-wops on the verses. Party moments abound on "Feels Good," a thumping chugger overlaid with breathy harmonies and jazzy piano; "Let's Have A Good Time," with its "Yes We Can Can" samples; and "All The Way,"

ROUGH TRADE



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where TITIT! are "just a bunch of brothers havin' a party," bustin' loose with vocals that sound like Friday night in the basement of the Q Psi Phi house. Also fun: funk march "Oakland Stroke," a paean to their hometown, spiced with "Jungle Boogie"-like horn riffs, coos and commentary from label-mate Vanessa Williams, and a surprise 40s-ish jazz break; and "Don't Talk About Me," yet another warning to a mouthy female that hips and hops into an almost Motown chorus with a sho'nuff Al Green bite for the bridge.

Revival works as evidence of the wide-ranging continuum of R&B, the ability of sterling soul to remain fresh for the new generation. The Tonies pull off the feat without obscuring their unique voice. Maybe some will be jolted by their barrage of remember-when musical references on *Revival*, but to the youthful crowd it's aimed at, much of this is brand-new.

—Janine McAdams



Bad Religion
No Control
Epitaph

A real punk band ought not to lie about obvious things, and Bad Religion is a real punk band, one of the few left. When Greg Graffin croons, "There's a watch in my pocket and its hands are broken," rest assured he knows the day/date function of said timepiece is stuck on 1981. That year, BR's debut LP *How Could Hell Be Any Worse?* set the standard for a zillion future SoCal melodic hardcore groups—headlong-fast but smooth, sung with sunny melodies to ease the lyrics' cynical sting.

Once established, Bad Religion disintegrated: guitarist/songwriter/walking thesaurus Mr. Brett got serious about his drug habit, and the second LP, *Into the Unknown*, featured slow tunes and synthesizers and everybody hated it. For most of the 80s Bad Religion was considered another one-hit footnote. But lo! By mid-88 Mr. Brett was clean and the band revived with a third LP, *Suffer*, clearly intended to capitalize on the best aspects of the first. Drummer Pete Finestone played the old beat(s), and the only

appreciable changes wrought by time were better production, a second guitarist (Greg Hetson of Circle Jerks) and an influx of seven-syllable words.

The lesson, obviously, was "don't mess with a good thing," so *No Control* is more of the same. No solutions here, just we're-all-idiots social commentary and snappy, overdriven surf riffs you coulda sold to Dead Kennedys or Husker for \$5 each once upon a time. But to dismiss Bad Religion as nostalgia freaks is to forget they write this stuff better than almost anyone. Every song on this album is concise and memorable. The best twine courageous hope and fatalism articulately enough to excuse the shriller sentiments of the lesser efforts.

—Tom Nordlie

UB40
Labour of Love II
Virgin

Ultimately trivial, though rather pretty at least half of the time, UB40's sequel to their boffo 1983 compilation of recuperated reggae hits goes down smooth as Irish moss. Lovingly layered percussion and simmering horns buffer

Ali Campbell's half-sobbing croons and Brother Robin's effortless harmonies, a patented sound that seems to mean a lot, while communicating only a sweet, decontextualized nothingness. Since it took five years for the first album to catch on in the USA, you have to figure that marketing concerns played a part in inspiring this curious artifact.

This time around the group mainly covers Jamaican versions of what were originally American R&B singles, including the Chi-Lites' "Lonely Girl," Smokey Robinson's "The Way You Do the Things You Do" and Al Green's "Here I Am Baby" (segueing, Jah knows why, into Lee Perry's "Small Axe"). Some of these chestnuts, "Kingston Town" and John Holt's "Wear You to the Ball" especially, sport their corn factor like a mantle of pride. But others, such as Leroy Sibbles' "Baby" and Byron Lee's "Groovin'," don't make it no-how, computerized dance-hall stylings notwithstanding.

Prescription: more labor, less love, take two aspirin and just call me Angel of the Morning.

—Richard Gehr

UB40 whisper sweet nothingness in your ears.





MC Hammer

Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em
Capitol

After first hearing MC Hammer's debut, *Let's Get It Started*, I filed it away, thinking, "Just another sucker MC who can't rap." Then Hammer blew up, his videos were kickin', his tightly choreographed stage show was live, his production company, Bustn' Records, busted out by discovering and producing Oaktown's 3.5.7 among others. Started rocked over two million ear-drums, and he landed a cameo on Earth, Wind & Fire's album *Heritage*. All that noise and Hammer's new album made me reassess this Oakland rapper: he's no small-time sucker, but he still can't rap.

Which isn't a knock against Hammer. Somewhere along the line he must've realized that his verbal prowess isn't on par with his physical fitness. "Here Comes the Hammer" and "U Can't Touch This" Hammer's voice is mostly muffled, his words barely distinguishable, his rhymes irrelevant; the thrill of listening to them is left to the imagination—how would Hammer and his posse interpret their slammin' beats on-stage? Probably better than Hammer interprets Michael Jackson's "Dancing Machine" and Marvin Gaye's "Mercy, Mercy Me" two songs Hammer doesn't sample, but interpolates. Interpolates? Yup. Hammer cold-cops the music tracks from these don't-touch-it-if-you're-not-gonna-hurt-it tunes, re-vamps the background singing and adds some rhymes of his own.

"On Your Face" (EW&F) and "Have You Seen Her" (Chi-Lites) are less interpolations than covers. Hip hop covers of R&B songs? Yup. Here Hammer reveals what's perhaps a secret longing—to be a singer, not a rapper. Or better, to be an entertainer. At this rate, if hip hop hits Las Vegas 15, 20 years from now, Hammer, with his business savvy and Oak-town posse, will be there rapping "My Way."

—Ben Mapp

MC Hammer won't hurt you



The Beautiful South Welcome to... Elektra

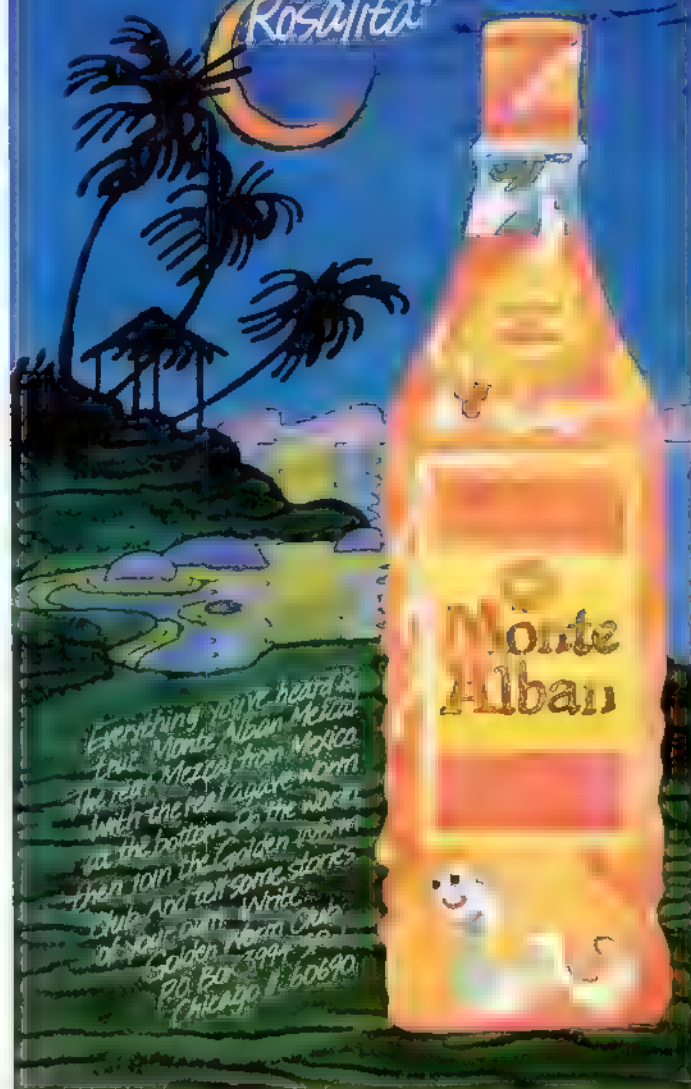
Paul Heaton and Dave Rothery, formerly of British pop phenoms The Housemartins, have returned with a revised agenda. On *Welcome to The Beautiful South*, Heaton and Company swap agitpop for soulfulism, the bitty guitars and harned beat of old for the more relaxed strains of brass and piano.

Not that a softer musical approach brings less lyrical cynicism. The Beautiful South rail against a series of familiar British diseases, alcoholism, laziness and nationalism among them. Yet they save their real disgust for their very livelihood, insulting the music industry on the throwaway "Straight in at 37," its songwriters on the splendid "Song For Whoever" and its audience on the highly-charged epic "Love Is..."

All of which suggests that The Beautiful South consider themselves outside the charade called pop. That, however, is a delusion: they are essentially a pop band best captured delivering perfect pop moments such as the wistful ballad "I'll Sail This Ship Alone" and the three-way vocal feast "You Keep It All In." They aren't yet a classic pop band, but *Welcome to the Beautiful South* remains exactly that—a warm introduction to an enticing new proposition. Here's to the sequel

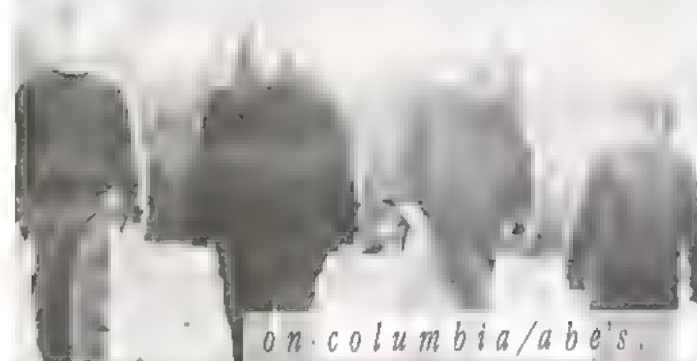
—Tony Fletcher

"What happened
when he ate the worm,
he won't tell.
But days later,
they say, he was still smiling.
Calling for greater truths,
more Monte Alban Mezcal, and
the fawn-eyed
beauty
Rosalita"





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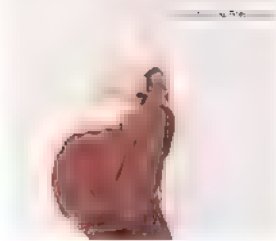


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Julia Fordham Porcelain Virgin

Dreamier than last year's polished debut, *Porcelain* continues to chronicle Julia Fordham's emotional travails. There's less tooth here than on the first no-sister-doin'-it-for-herse f "Woman of the 80s" or funk pumped "Unconditional Love." Her evocative tales of partnerships worth working for and affairs gone wrong are cloaked in jazz sparkled slow dance melodies. Fordham appears vulnerable and disenchanted. On the brooding title track, she asks him, he loves her, she enjoys sleeping with him, but there's no magic. It's a wonderful modern dilemma: a woman freeing her sexuality only to confront emotional boundaries. Soaring through her dark lower register to strike crystalline high notes, Fordham breaks from the controlled chorus into a passionate scat. As the simple melody cascades into a sea of riffs, lush background vocals lift a mournful oboe solo.

Looking inward to find chords that strike us all, Fordham plays out the conflict between romantic devotion and self-assertion. On "Porcelain," feminine vulnerability often betrays her confident spirit. Accompanied by a somber lounge piano on "Towerblock," she regrets the diminished self-reliance felt when a strong-willed partner leaves. Even though feminist platitudes are often eclipsed by heartbreak's shadow, Fordham is still an advocate. Drifting on forlorn chords, "Island" reassures a disappointed woman friend that sisters always stand ready to help.

A former background vocalist with Mary Wilson's Wilsons, Fordham, on her first LP, evidenced her ability to cast aside British propriety and get down with the bass. The more gossamer *Porcelain* borrows accents from tribal congas and the beats of bossa nova. The gentle polyrhythms that drive "Lock and Key" lend an unhurried island feel. But while Fordham's got the chops (if not the torrid soul) to be a diva bianca, the Brazilian-influenced "Genius" doesn't work so well. The I'm-sorry-we-stupid-white-people-burned-your-rubber-trees lyrics sound presumptuous when she's mining their musical culture so blithely for her own ends.

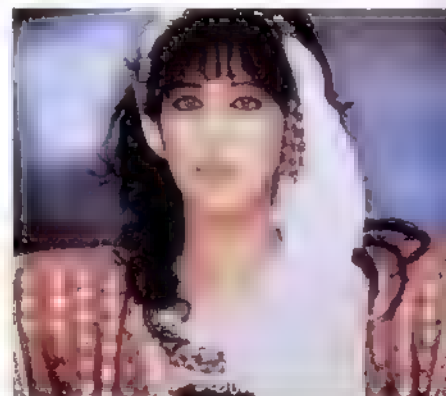
Ivory skin, platinum locks, a statuesque figure draped in red velvet—Julia Fordham's image spells transcendent, independent, aloof. Her bewitching siren's alto croons confessional tales of love that invite commiseration. But if you do get swept away—and you will—it's not by the relief of shattered intimacy. Fordham remains removed. Ignited by romance, she's an ice queen who carries a torch.

—Rosemary Passantino

Ofra Haza Desert Wind Sire

After her first American album, *Shaday*, Yemenite-Israeli folk-pop singer Ofra Haza was in danger of becoming the next exotic rush-of-the-month for clubland dilettantes and wealthy pop stars dipping their jeweled fingers into the powdered shards of "ethnic" musics. The mix masters did not want Ofra's desert word whole. They just wanted, literally, to "sample."

In *Desert Wind*, Ofra and her produc-



Ofra Haza, reverse colonizer

er Bezalel Anani turn on her expropriators, ready to do some reverse colonization. They're after not only the groove masters at the clubs but also people who listen to the radio. So they've taken pieces of Western pop, Israeli pop and Ofra's Yemeni folk and religious songs and woven a seamless new kind of, uh... folk-rock? (Ofra, there's this guy named McGowan I really think you should meet.)

This is a talent ripe to display its first full flowering. The record kicks right off with "Wish Me Luck," which like most of these songs shows a supple command of the international language of pure pop (Ofra says that while she was listening to her mother's Yemenite chants she was also listening to the Beatles). It's a rollicking invocation of the goddess Chance, hooky chorus on hooky chorus couched in astringent Semitic melodies,

crackling with sharp exotic percussion. The percussion programming is inspired—looped horns and flutes and cymbals, strange wailing things with names like baglama, ut and tasht, evoking the muezzin, the market square and the dance floor all at once.

And there's that voice, reedy and incantatory one moment, full of throb and heavy-lidded insinuation the next. It's a voice that carries both desert fatalism and the restlessness of a new, urbanized, westernized generation—a voice that knows exactly the effects it wants and how to get them. In the impressionistic "Da'asa," a "desert wailing song," all she does is wail, but each wail is eloquently inflected and pointed to advance the story.

It's cool. Ofra's music teases our Western rock'n'roll longing for strangeness, then satisfies it by giving us soul and personality and cultural context. By making sure that context was at the heart of *Desert Wind*, Ofra and Bezalel offer something better than "world beat"—they offer a world.

Chris Hill

Sinitta
Wicked
Atlantic

Sybil
Sybil
Next Plateau

Want to be a disco sensation? Take a tip from Sybil Lynch and Sinitta Malone, who've ditched their last names, spun rhythm-obsessed cover versions of 60s and 70s classics into the charts, and fleshed out their LPs with odds and ends from a bevy of producers.

As a dancefloor diva, Sinitta, 23, is to the manner born. Her mom is Miguel "So Many Men So Little Time" Brown, auntie Amii Stewart discoed "Knock on Wood," and "Sin" herself starred in a production of "The Wiz." Gracing her album sleeve in six skintight skin-print wardrobe components, sunglasses in mouth and jheri curls, Sinitta embraces and personifies flash-in-the-pan dance-pop, calling her latest disc *Wicked* without the slightest hint of irony. Once a star of the Stock-Aitken-Waterman produc-

tion stable (which has included Rick Astley and Bananarama), Sinitta since has fallen into less capable hitmaking hands and opted for quick career resuscitation via cover versions. With a synths-and-sax aerobicized rendition of Maxine Nightingale's "Right Back Where We Started From" an agreeable over-before-you-know-it toe-tapper Sinitta strikes a blow for racial and sexual equality by proving that she, too, can be as colorless as S-A-W's newest money-makers, Aussies Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue. But it is all for naught. While the pop tart philosophy of "Where Do Nice Girls Go" and "Body Shopping" offers some guilty pleasure, Sinitta's unexplored vocal personality is swamped by slave-to-the-rhythm, computer-generated musical clichés. For cringe value, however, nothing compares to "Hitchin' a Ride," Sinitta's remake of the dreadful 1970 Vanity Fare hit that manages to incorporate "Drive My Car" 's beep-beep-um-beep-beep-yeah with a riff from the Bananarama cover of "Venus."

Under the musical "selection and supervision" of Eddie O'Loughlin, 25-year-old New Jersey-bred Sybil seems to be emerging as the Dionne Warwick of the Soul II Soul generation. Her achingly sexy congas-strings-and-coos versions of Burt Bacharach's "Don't Make Me Over" and "Walk on By" have brought her the attention her gospel-inflected voice deserves, and her jazzy take on "I Wanna Be Where You Are" (Michael Jackson, 1972) should yield yet another smash. But Sybil is a far more formidable talent than most cover girls. Comfortable playing the "Star Search" chanteuse on sparse, smoochy soul numbers like "Living for the Moment," and equally at home with the mid-tempo Latin hip hop pop of "Can't Wait (On Tomorrow)," Sybil's versatility and emotional expression enliven some of the rather ordinary original tunes on this LP. Not among those, however, are the stark, stunning beatbox ballad "Love's Calling" and "Crazy for You," a duet with Salt-N-Pepa on which Sybil releases bump'n'grind funk with the verve and the voice that Paula Abdul (not to mention Sinitta) wishes she had.

—David Keeps

Dancefloor diva Sybil



the relentless drone of mindless drivel spews on and on. aspire to more.



THE ORIGIN

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BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL



Jazz giant Cecil Taylor

Courtesy of A&M Records

For the uninitiated, a Cecil Taylor performance can be like sitting in the middle of a breaking tide wave on a leaky rubber raft. He stalks the stage moaning surrealist incantations, his braided and beaded hair tossing. At the piano he becomes a barely seated dervish, body reeling and swaying, arms flailing, legs pumping, hands contorting and stretching impossibly as they stroke and pummel the keys. Imploded whimpers rise, sob, sink back into the instrument, explode into note clusters slam-dunked by an elbow or a forearm or a fist. No clear melodies, no certain rhythms, no song structure.

At age 57, Taylor is a legend among jazzers because of his relentless pioneering, his dedication. Back in the 50s, still under the sway of keyboard greats like Thelonious Monk, Herbie Nichols, Horace Silver and Lennie Tristano, the young Taylor was already developing the idiosyncratic language that makes his piano sound like nothing else. Learning from Monk's breakthrough use of the piano's pedals to bend notes from between the keys, adapting Tristano's dryly stripped-back rhythms to his own introspective emotional emphasis, Taylor mixed

jazz-derived idioms with the insights of 20th-century classical radicals like Stravinsky, Bartok, Henry Cowell, Harry Partch and John Cage.

He'd been classically trained in his Long Island boyhood. His mother, who played keyboards herself, started her five-year-old son studying piano, then timpani, with one of Toscanini's musicians. After attending the New York College of Music, he entered the New England Conservatory in 1952 and left after three years: he felt the curriculum was racist because it ignored African-American sounds. That refusal to compromise continued to mark his character and his music.

By the early 60s, Taylor's voice was almost fully developed, and helped point the way for the emerging avant-garde—John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman. With Taylor's music as one of their fierce beacons, they would not only detonate the song structure cycle-of-chords jazz had borrowed from popular music, but in the process launch into free jazz, where they reinvestigated and dramatically realigned the relationship between composition and improvisation, the dialectic motor that powers jazz.

By 1962, Taylor was widely recog-

The New Album

Featuring the Songs "Enjoy The Silence" and "Personal Jesus"

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nized among his fellow musicians—besides his own recordings, he'd been showcased by Gil Evans on the landmark *Into The Hot* (Impulse). He'd formed his first Unit, as he usually calls his groups, with alto saxist Jimmy Lyons and drummer Sunny Murray, who seemed almost telepathically keyed-in to Taylor's increasingly dense, emotionally structured sound as it hurtled through charged-energy fields that implied, rather than stated, beats. He'd toured Europe, and the Unit had linked up there with Ayler. He'd won the prestigious downbeat "New Star" award. And he alternated between welfare and washing dishes, because he couldn't make it on his music. His father had subsidized him; when he died in 1961, Taylor's financial safety net disappeared. Stubborn and prickly and determined to make music on his own terms, he struggled through the decade on a handful of concert dates and low-paying club gigs combined with dishwashing.

From this period on, Taylor's manic excursions more and more resembled in intent and effect, though not in approach, the trance music of northern Africa and the Middle East. Melody, harmony and rhythm collapsed into an eddying kaleidoscopic whirl that spewed their wreckage back out in choppy waves. The now-you-hear-them-now-you-don't fragments were

what Taylor dubbed *unit structures*, which essentially replaced the linear development of musical ideas with a kind of multilayered call-and-response. The result can feel like a Cubist collage in motion, especially on classic albums like *3 Phases* (New World).

Emotional motion coupled with swashbuckling technique drives Taylor's gnarled and often frustrating music. His first release on a US major label in over a decade, *In Florescence* (A&M), underlines the concentrated fury of his inward gaze; it also demonstrates why Taylor's listeners, after about twenty minutes, either bend and relax into his nonstop assault or move their gritted teeth somewhere else before they break. No matter who he's playing with or what he's up to, Taylor is a supremely romantic artist: rather than engaging musicians and audiences in dialogue, he relentlessly expands his interior monologue to try to engulf them. Now supported by foundations and academia, he's played at the Carter White House and tours prosperously. Ironically, he's followed his radical visions to success and fame—one of the few jazz prophets to be honored in his own country in his own lifetime.

Gene Santoro

Salt-N-Pepa Black's Magic Next Plateau



Salt-N-Pepa don't just want to have fun

For years now, Salt-N-Pepa have stood well above the cat-fights and hitches that some folks can't help but associate with the world of girl rappers. After all, their first single was a school project, and their career has been charmed ever since. So if Salt-N-Pepa's rhymes weren't always what they should have been, or if conveying a larger social message never quite seemed to make their short list, it was easy to love them anyway. Salt-N-Pepa were just a couple of big girls who felt good about their bodies and having fun. And for their public, that was enough.

Until now. On *Black's Magic*, what's absent or wrong is harder to ignore. First of all, the lion's share of songs here tease you with righteous opening riffs, but don't take them anywhere particularly interesting. Too many lyrics seem dashed off as afterthoughts take "Negro Wit' an Ego," for instance. On a previous Salt-N-Pepa record, this might have been a funny song dissing boyfriends. Here, it's about black empowerment—an eminently agreeable proposition, but a dicy one when employing an outdated term like *Negro* just because the rhyme is cool. Or witness this bit from "Do You Want Me": "Don't try to rush it / Be my friend not just my lover / Share your thoughts with me / Love my mind not just my body." Hallmark anyone?

Not to say the record doesn't have its moments. "Let's Talk About Sex" packs a wallop with the kind of sassy, seductive humor the two previous Salt-N-Pepa records were chockful of. And "Expression" is a danceable darn near perfect number that owes more than a touch to Chaka Khan's 84 proto-hip house hit "I Feel For You." As on "Push It" and "Shake Your Thang," the duo's two biggest hits, the rapping and singing go head-to-head to extremely good effect.

Kim France

Janet Beckett/Outline Press



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Lisa Stansfield
Affection
Arista

Toss off your boa and take a listen to Lisa Stansfield's debut LP, *Affection*. On the heels of the UK's summer of love

(rave parties, effervescent dance music and Soul II Soul's message of interracial harmony), it makes sense that this updated tribute to 70s multi-ethnic soul would come from England. Like her female R&B predecessors, Freda Payne, Carla Thomas and Fontella Bass, Stansfield soothes and redeems. Her songs have a double edge—grounded in experience yet infused with optimism.

Stansfield's voice first careened through the airwaves on British megamixers Coldcut's catchy hit "People Hold On." In a similar vein, the opening track on *Affection*, "This is the Right

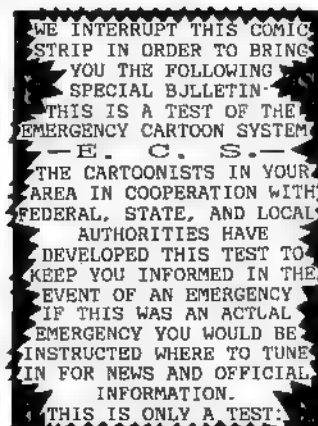
Time," is perfect pop rollicking over a regal R&B rhythm. The tune bubbles up to your head, filled with inspiration and hope. But that's not to say Stansfield's optimism is the dizzy stuff of pop bimbos: she also effectively conveys the anxiety of breaking up on "When Are You Coming Back?" and the taboos of certain relationships on "Poison." Reflecting a complex range of emotions, her voice goes from deep and breathy to high, scat-like resolutions. She definitely learned a lesson or three from Jean Knight and other Stax Miss Big-Stuffs. Her breathing, phrasings, pronunciation and pitch are derivative of that era—the way she works the lower notes fiercely, as in "The Way You Want It," then takes her funky spirit to a well-rounded chorus with ease and grace.

But to call *Affection* a copy of 70s soul would be unfair. Sure, the album reminds you of Barry White's minimal arrangements and Teddy Pendergrass signature "smoothness" as it struts along, toting a bit of Womack & Womack and the gospelly Staples Singers along with it. But the LP also reflects modern production, the groove of Chicago house music, as well as hip-hop's foot-stomping fly beats. Stansfield's dramatic stance and her singing convey something real and substantive.

—Marisa Fox

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The Church Gold Afternoon Fix Arista

Underground bands tend to hit it big only upon slickening their sound. But when Australian cult faves The Church lushed up an already grandiose mix with strings and horns for 1985's *Heyday*, all they received was a pink slip from Warner Bros. Instead, the band achieved pop success two years later with "Under the Milky Way," an unadorned ballad that singer/bassist Steve Kilbey fashioned after a Sinatra tune from his boyhood days.

The folks at Arista should thus be pleased that the band's latest, *Gold Afternoon Fix*, continues in a more down-to-earth vein. Guitars prevail, the psychedelic affectations of earlier records are barely apparent (save in the LP title), and LA session vet Waddy Wachtel once more provides smooth production without commercial overkill.

For the listener, however, results remain mixed. Clearly, having dropped the 60s angle, The Church are still searching for an identity that fits. They could learn from the relative restraint of their smash; the best tracks on *Gold Afternoon Fix* mine the same subtle terrain as "Milky Way," with Kilbey reigning in his more extravagant lyrical impulses and the band following suit

with spare arrangements and languid tempos. Sure, it's the kind of stuff that can fade to nothingness on your home stereo, but on a Walkman, it becomes the perfect soundtrack to your sad little existence. "Disappointment," the record's loveliest track, smartly borrows "Milky Way"'s vaguely Latin rhythms and vocal intimacy, but goes even further, gently suggesting the cloudiness of regret, an emotional inertia born of romantic devastation.

The same appealing moodiness pervades "City," "Laughing" and "Monday Morning," but it's offset by a few strident attempts at decadent dance-pop. The better tracks on their last record had an undercurrent of sinuous menace that gave them a needed charge, but here Kilbey goes overboard into crass, sub-Bowie obnoxiousness. He simply doesn't have the sexual charisma to carry off intentional trash like the space opera scenarios of "Terra Nova Cain" and "Metropolis," which offer colorful intergalactic scenery as an excuse for the takeoff of Kilbey's libido.

A few more irresistible melodies might've saved *Gold Afternoon Fix* from its own goofiness. As subsequent tracks bear out, however, Kilbey's too busy trying to link his sci-fi visions to a major statement on time itself. He could learn something from guitarist Peter Dinklage's "Transient," as the record's most

dynamic rocker and as its definitive statement on the temporal meaning of rock'n'roll: "Here for now."

—Jen Fleischer

The Church (l-r): Steve Kilbey, Marty Willson-Piper, Peter Koppes



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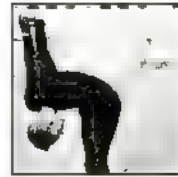
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underground

Crabs, Sun City
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Arkhangelsk

Column by Byron Coley



New York State's Borbetomagus, a quality dip from Lowlife stock.

Hello friends, here we are again. And my you're looking well. That is, you're looking well unless you happen to be a member of some band called the **Crabs**. This band, or persons using their name, sent me a series of photos of people I presume to be the Crabs themselves engaged in a set of cumbersome (and in all likelihood illegal) activities with a bunch of young fellows. And I realize that, yeah, I *did* ask for readers to send nude photos, but *mano a boyo* wrestling snaps were not what I had in mind. Thanks Crabs, but no thanks Well, on to other things.

Just out of the box, and so majestic that it makes my brain do out-skull jigs across my sizzling, glass-strewn floor, is the **Sun City Girls'** new LP, *Torch Of The Mystic* (Majora, PO Box 78418, Seattle, WA 98178). As the heppiest of you undoubtedly know, the Girls are a death-defying improv-rock band from Arizona who number no females amongst their membership, but who still bleed profusely on a near-monthly basis. Their recordings tend to be scattershot fiestas of lump-rich style-

gumbo, and *Mystic* is easily the richest, lumpiest puddle of guh they've yet emitted. The sounds on this record have moments of style-lifting, however, that should endear them even to fans of olden-days out-rock (a notoriously Luddite audience). At one point you'll

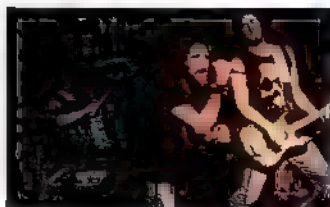
"hear" the circa-65 Mothers chanting "Help I'm A Rock" while being pushed into a kettle of boiling oil by the West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band; at another you'll swear that your head is stuck in a lardy commode while one of the Fugs' ESP recording sessions rages around your sweat-soaked and heaving trousers. ET fuckin'-CETERA. But these "cops" are not central parts of the whole. They pop up, rather, amidst swirling, psychedelic ethnic forgeries that will make Can fans renounce all post-Landed Kraut Rock wax. Combined with this is greasy, long-wound-out puling that could come from nowhere but the small Arizona trailer park that birthed these honchos. The mix is nothing short of bo-weaving and I can't imagine that this disk will have many equals in 1990.

My working knowledge of Louisiana's subterranean music scene is not as strong as it might be. Apart from early 80s bands like Toxin III, the Manic Depressives, Shell Shock and the Shit Dogs (they were from there, right?), I've got a hard time recalling any bands outta the bayous except lame R&B retreads and phonus roots goombahs. Well, now I've got something else to chew on from down there. Namely the debut mini-LP by the **Phantoms**, entitled *More Drunken Buffoonery* (Martini, PO Box 21126, Baton Rouge, LA 70893). While their sound is not the most original I've heard, it compares quite favorably to the swinging drug-rock chunkery tossed out by other Southern bumps, such as the Psycho Daisies and the D.T. Martyrs (both from Florida). Some of the guys in this band apparently returned to their swampy roots after the dissolution of NY scungers, the Kretins (whose death also gave birth to Da Willys), and that Lower East Side vein-scar-beat is pretty apparent here. It gets crossed with Southern Rock BIG-GUITAR lead-jerkery a bit too often for my personal tastes, but when it slides and chugs like some moonshine-sodden teen crawling along a dirt road looking for the goofballs he's "sure" he dropped there, it is worth huffing.

Since you ask, yeah, the second album by the **Caspar Brotzmann Massaker** is out. Its name is *Black Axis* (Zensor, Potsdamerstr. 168, 1000 Berlin 30, W. Germany) and it's a dark sheet of metal-laced skronk that'll pound your senses like a cross between Machine Gun and

Fifth-era Swans. It is rock-based gush, forced by Caspar's guitar through red-hot mazes of "noise" piping, eventually splashing out onto the dancing surface of some improvisational waterworks. The only bands I can think of with more potential wattage in the guitar-sonics department are those led by the Japanese string-monster K.K. Null. Massaker makes even the most powerful tractor sound about as charged up as a salad fork. Play *Black Axis* loud enough and you can feel your genes splicing. And yeah, since you asked, Caspar is the son of legendary saxophonist Peter Brotzmann.

Cassettes are still very near the bottom of my format list, it's true, but every once in a while some exceptions show up in my PO Box that more or less demand attention. A couple such items just showed up bearing the *imprimatur* of *Lowlife* (PO Box 8213, Atlanta, GA 30306-0213). *Lowlife* is, of course, a magazine chronicling extreme sounds from the South and elsewhere, so I guess it's not surprising that they've started to release this kinda junk. It's just nice that their batch of releases included such doozies. The first I heard was **Borbetomagus'** *Live In Allentown*, a superb performance from Halloween 1985. Borbetomagus, a brilliant free music outfit from New York State, have been written about here before, and this tape (along with the recent *Seven Reasons For Tears* LP) is an excellent place to start your collection. Documenting the band during their period as a quartet (two saxes, guitar and bass), this tape is a brutally powerful, top-logging cascade of unearthly whoosh and intensity. A great damn thing. As is the untitled cassette by the defunct (I think) Atlanta duo known as **PVC Precinct**. Their tape comes packed in a beautifully decorated piece of PVC tubing and is filled to the bonny brim with totally-gage electro-manipulo-spazzery. Sampled, raked, triggered and flanged, some of their pieces have a feel as friendly as a joy buzzer in the hand of Harry Partch, others are as dreamily mean as a dogfight arranged and lorded-over by Nurse With Wound and 73-era Gong, still others resonate like a turban filled with bees. Both of these tapes are more essential than 99 percent of extant records (and 100 percent of extant CDs), so if you've gotta dip into the format you might as well dip at *Lowlife*.



North Carolina punk rockin' mofos Antiseen.

A new **Antiseen** record is always cause for celebration, and their latest LP, *Noise For The Sake Of Noise*

(Dogmeat, import) is an especially honkin' slab of righteous urk. For those as yet unaware, let me say that Antiseen are a pack of punk rockin' mofos from North Carolina, whose only known equals in terms of unalloyed power-booting are LA's Lazy Cowgirls and Portland's Poison Idea. Antiseen combine Joe Young's fuzz-crunch guitar-lines with the insane bellow of Jeff Clayton's blood-red vocal chords, producing a yowl and yammer that is as rare and loud as a fart from the corpse of Gleason. This album collects a variety of sessions from several of the band's "periods" and smooshes them all together like iron-clad sardines being shot from a hot wax Gatling gun. There are even covers of Dylan, Roky and the Ramones, recorded on a Walkman, that'll kick the ass of any band you consider tough. All I can say is don't think you've listened to punk aggro 'til you've heard these men. They make even the gnarliest hardcore cretins sound as sissified as the Crabs and they live to tell you about it.

One of the sharpest things I've heard lately is **Jazz Group Arkhangelsk's** *Pilgrims* double-LP (Leo, import, available via NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012). As with many great records, *Pilgrims* is tough to sum up in mere words. The band is based in far, far Northern Russia (damn near inside the Arctic Circle) and their playing encompasses a set of styles so wide that their breadth makes Lisa Delieuw's haunches seem insubstantial by comparison. They veer from near-straight sambas to drug-trance workouts of the sort that I thought were only recorded on Swedish communes in the early 70s. And everything is pushed through a free jazz grid that has as many bristles as the strident death-to-normalcy loft shit of the mid-60s, while somehow keeping the listener in touch with the fact that it's Russians that're playing the stuff. Folk themes appear like oily wisps of hash smoke, mingle with the extant hemp clouds hovering overhead, then come swinging down like a fishnet outta the heavens. Amazing grace.

Thanks for sending all the swell love beads. Now just stop sending cassettes and everything will be jake. PO Box 301, West Somerville, MA 02144.

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Environmental House

Column by Frank Owen

singles

Someone once defined house music as disco where all the people are dead. They were talking about "Distant Planet" by The It, a record that featured the bizarre other-worldly crooning of Robert Owens and the maverick production talents of Larry Heard. Sounding like it was recorded on the dark side of the moon, "Distant Planet" was erroneously lumped under the now-discredited label "acid house," whereas in reality it existed outside of genre.

Three years later, after the inevitable backlash against the machinic textures of acid house, pronouncements about the death of disco humanism seem unnecessarily apocalyptic as The Crusaders happily rub shoulders with Technotronic on the American dancefloor. Too much of a musician, Larry Heard never was acid house, despite the fact that his "Washing Machine" is widely credited as the founding record of the genre.

New age house, ambient house, abstract house, whatever you call his music, Heard—under a variety of pseudonyms, such as Mr. Fingers, Fingers Inc., the Gherkin Jerks, The It—has created a distinctive body of work characterized by an eerie,

environmental feel. Even when a voice is featured, as on "What About This Love" (Alleviated) by Mr. Fingers, it's simply another instrument that blends into Heard's seamless soundscape, now taking on a marked jazz-fusion tinge. Heard couldn't make a conventional record if he tried. "What About This Love," though a straightforward house semi-ballad at first hearing, is in fact something infinitely more disturbing and awe-inspiring after repeated listens.

Heard is in a more experimental mode on "1990" (Alleviated) by the Gherkin Jerks. While "What About This Love" pays lip service to the fiction that this is a performance being captured on tape, the six instrumental tracks ("Meltdown," "Blast Off," "Red Planet," "Saturn V," "Space Dance" and "Strange Creatures") that make up "1990" wear their studio artifice with pride—music that refuses to be reduced to notes and house music that is more about textures than beats.

House Busters "Planet Rock 90" (Hard House)

Speakerhead "The Adventures Of Speakerhead" (Never Stop)

"Planet Rock" by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force was one of those records that changed

everything—an epistemological break with the preceding history of black music. It was the year zero of the new dance music, and its influence can still be felt strongly, in Miami bass, Detroit techno and LA hip hop. Ironically, in its hometown of New York its influence has declined, the radical listening experience it once was lost under the weight of endless imitations that followed in its wake. "Planet Rock 90" has some historical importance as a footnote in the history of how Kraftwerk became more important to the history of black music than James Brown, but as a piece of plastic it just don't cut it.

"The Adventures Of Speakerhead" is more interesting, exploring the man-machine dancefloor interface initiated by "Planet Rock." Miami has never gotten over "Planet Rock" and producer Eric Griffin proves that New York is not always right.

Beats International "Dub Be Good To Me," (Elektra)

Rebel MC "Just Keep Rockin' " / "Street Tuff" (Desire/PolyGram)

If the Gherkin Jerks' record is an album masquerading as a single, then the 21 mixes of "Just Keep Rockin' " / "Street Tuff" is a single masquerading as an album. Featuring, among others, a

Sk'ouse mix, a Bass Heavy mix, a Hiphouse mix and assorted Norman Cook mixes, the record is both a marketing gimmick and a testament to the way the British mix and match different musical genres, unlike in the US, where the demarcation lines between house, hip hop and reggae still remain fiercely patrolled aesthetic boundaries.

In case you've forgotten, the aforementioned Norman Cook is the former Housemartin who once wrote an article for the *NME* about hip hop break beats that was lifted directly from David Toop's "Rap Attack." Cook—now a producer—samples the bassline from "Guns of Brixton" by the Clash to greater effect on "Dub Be Good To Me" by Beats International. An exquisite cover of the SOS Band's classic "Just Be Good To Me," Beats International has the distinctive languid air of lovers rock. A classy and pertinent fusion, "Dub Be Good To Me" is similar in execution to the recent British import "Wishing On A Star" by Fresh Four, featuring Lizz E. That bombed in this country, and so will this probably. But that's America's loss.

Above The Law "Murder Rap" (Epic) The thing I dislike about NWA and their protégés Above The Law is not their use of gangster imagery, but the way they use it. Above The Law are supposed to be pimps and hustlers, yet they present this hardcore life without any of the dandy charm that Big Daddy Kane or Oran "Juice" Jones bring to it. A pimp who can't dress? Whatever next. On the positive side, NWA producer Dr. Dre has a remarkable talent for making noise funky, and he shows it to great effect on "Murder Rap."

The A-list

The Chimes "Heaven" (Capitol)

Dr. Mouthquake "Love On Love" (Virgin)

Innocence featuring Gee Morris "Natural Thing" (Profile)

Hip House Syndicate "Free James Brown" (Select)

The DOC "The Formula" (Atlantic)

Lawanda Big Bottom "Total Madness" (Dope Wax)

The Chimes—ringing the bell for quality British dance music.



LISTEN TO THE MUSIC IN THIS ISSUE OF SPIN

DIAL

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ALBUM CODE ARTIST ALBUM

SPINS

| | | |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Tony! Toni! Toné! | Revival |
| 2 | Bad Religion | No Control |
| 3 | Lisa Stansfield | (Arista) |
| 4 | MC Hammer | Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em |
| 5 | Julia Fordham | Porcelain |
| 6 | Otra Haza | Desert Wind |
| 7 | UB40 | Labour of Love II |
| 8 | Salt-N-Pepa | Black's Magic |
| 9 | The Church | Gold Afternoon Fix |
| 10 | The Beautiful South | Welcome to ... |
| 11 | Sinitta | Wicked |
| 12 | Sybil | Sybil |

HEAVY ROTATION

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | The Church | Gold Afternoon Fix |
| 2 | The Pursuit of Happiness | One Sided Story |
| 3 | Nitzer Ebb | Showtime |
| 4 | Various Artists | Every Band Has a Shonen Knife Who Loves Them |
| 5 | X-Clan | To The East, Blackwards |
| 6 | Lisa Stansfield | Affection |

COLLEGE RADIO TOP 30

| | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | They Might Be Giants | Flood |
| 2 | Peter Murphy | Deep |
| 3 | Eleventh Dream Day | Beel |
| 4 | Jesus and Mary Chain | Automatic |
| 5 | Ministry | The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste |
| 6 | Creatures | Boomerang |
| 7 | Midnight Oil | "Blue Sky Mine" |
| 8 | Smithereens | 11 |
| 9 | The Blue Nile | Hats |
| 10 | Flat Duo Jets | Flat Duo Jets |
| 11 | Sinead O'Connor | "Nothing Compares 2 U" |
| 12 | Nine Inch Nails | Pretty Hate Machine |
| 13 | Psychedelic Furs | Book Of Days |
| 14 | Kate Bush | The Sensual World |
| 15 | Skinny Puppy | Rabies |
| 16 | Wonder Stuff | Hup |
| 17 | Michael Penn | March |
| 18 | John Wesley Harding | Here Comes The Groom |
| 19 | Revs-Ups | Chance |
| 20 | Grant Hart | Intolerance |
| 21 | Ian McCulloch | Candleland |
| 22 | Silencers | A Blues For Buddha |
| 23 | Thin White Rope | Sack Full Of Silver |
| 24 | King Missile | Mystical Shit |
| 25 | UB40 | Labour Of Love II |
| 26 | Mission U.K. | Carved In Sand |
| 27 | Morrissey | "Ouija Board, Ouija Board" |
| 28 | Renegade Soundwave | Soundclash |
| 29 | B-52's | Cosmic Thing (Reprise) |
| 30 | Cramps | Stay Sick! (Enigma) |



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 - ▶ **HOT SPIN** - PREVIEW SELECTIONS FROM TWO OUTSTANDING RECORDS OF THE WEEK SELECTED BY SPIN STAFF.

WORLD BEAT!

Uptown Dominica

Column by
Daisann McLane

Let's go uptown—I mean uptown Manhattan's Washington Heights is a rickety half-hour subway ride north from Times Square, but who needs Broadway when you've got Studio 84? The nightclub of New York's

hundreds-of-thousands-strong Dominican émigré community opens at 10:00. Arrive before 2:00 AM, and you're too early.

Enter a palace of mirrors and disco balls, drop-dead gorgeous ladies in rococo satin ruffles, handsome blades in double-breasted tropical linens and serious gold. What's pulsing through Studio 84's high-tech system at 150 beats a minute makes you wonder why anybody here would bother with artificial stimuli at all. Heart-stopping percussion, brain-scrambling horns, songs about pelvic action and penis size. This is fast lane Caribbean

music—raunchy, slick, spinning from the hips at 78 rpm. This is merengue.

Merengue is to the Dominican Republic what reggae is to Jamaica, or soca to Trinidad: the musical heartbeat, the soul, the rhythm of an island. The basics—a pulsing 4/4, accented by five ratatatat! beats—the *cinquillo*—that bubble in the space between the four and the one. The *cinquillo* is merengue's signature, and it's also the cue for dancers to do a halt spin and drag one foot. Merengue legend: the foot-dragging started when a famous wounded-in-battle Dominican general got up to dance at a party one night. Since the wound left him lame, his left leg kept sliding around. Nobody wanted to offend the hero, so they all started to imitate him, and a new dance craze was born.

Merengue's simple 4/4 framework allows for plenty of variation with a style for every taste. If you're into funky accordions, check out merengue *tipico*, the music of the Dominican Republic's rural north. *Tipico* is as raw as music gets in the Caribbean; there's a rhythm section of guira (metal scratcher), tambora and a conga drum. Up front is a sax player and the bandleader, who plays button accordion and belts out verses about horny neighbors, the village loco and nervous new yveds. You can almost hear the squawk of chickens in the yard—country music, Caribbean style. Interestingly, *tipico* is as popular at Studio 84 as it is in Dominican dance halls back in Santiago. The hot stars: El Cieguito de Nagua, El Cieguito de Jacagua and the incredible Fefita la Grande, a red-headed spark plug who plays squeezebox like Ornette Coleman while shaking her hips against the beat. Why is *tipico* dominated by blind men and women? According to my Dominican informant, it's because they're closer to the angels.

Contemporary merengue, the music that blasts from every car and bodega north of 135th Street, spiffs up the raw *tipico* sound, but never forgets where it comes from. The *cinquillo* is boosted with congas, and there are trap drums and techno-keyboards, but instead of enhancing the sax/accordion lines with

guitars (the way the Haitians do in their merengue offspring, *compas*), the merengue arrangers use horns. At a time when most of the rest of the Caribbean is in the thrall of samplers, DX7s, and the sonic ticklers of Parisian studios, in la República, brass rules. Dominican arrangers like Manuel Tejada, Sonny Ovalle and Ringo Martínez compete with each other to see who can create the most brain-burning interlocking brass puzzles. My pick of the moment, Martínez's horn lines on Jossie Esteban y La Patrulla 15's hit "El Moreno Está." A layer of saxes, then a layer of trumpets, then a contrapuntal injection of trombones—voilà! Merengue upside-down cake.

Johnny Ventura is considered the father of the modern merengue sound, but Wilfrido Vargas is merengue's ambassador, the Dominican Republic's biggest international star. Trumpeter Vargas is the studio whiz of this music—he was the first to play with synthesizers and creative mix techniques, and he's been doing the pan-Caribbean thing for years. On his last LP, *Mas Que Un Loco*, Vargas mixed merengue with Colombian *vallenato* music; on his latest, *Animation*, he spices things with Trinidadian soca, and Guadeloupean zouk.

Other chart-toppers on the uptown jukebox: Boyish Sergio Vargas' no relation to Wilfrido—is the current heartthrob of the scene, with a new zouk and soca-influenced LP, *La Coca*. Band is rude and fun—recently they sang their hit, "La Flaca" to a sellout crowd at Madison Square Garden while waving giant cow bones in the air. Las Chicas del Can is Wilfrido Vargas's bubbly, giggly girl group, kind of like the Shirelles go to Santo Domingo. Fernandito Villalona croons yearning macho ballads over pumping *cinquillo* throbs, and the New York Band, a group of born-in-the-USA Dominicans, fuse the black street beat with the music of their parents' homeland.

Finally, there's the professor of merengue, Juan Luis Guerra, his nation's Ruben Blades or David Rudder. Guerra writes hip, smart songs about immigration, hard times, lust and love that cross class and race lines. More a romantic than a politician, Guerra's melodies linger on the tongue like the aftertaste of a shot of fine rum (His band, 440, are a vocal group instead of horns; singers trade Manhattan Transfer-like riffs.) Smooth, and perfectly suitable as background for pan-Caribbean brunches, Guerra's merengue *elegante* may seem light years from *tipico*'s raunch fest, but it's not really. Listen closely to these songs and you'll hear the heartbeat of merengue: the guira, the tambora, the conga. And the flutter of the wings of approving angels.



The real stuff from
Jamaica



REGGAE
SUNSHINE
SOUL

JAMAICA
PROBLEM

Red Stripe

THE GREAT
JAMAICAN BEER



DRAGON
Puts It Back

Satire by D.J. Samuels and Ben Metcalf

—This abortion thing just refuses to die. I thought I had it nailed down yesterday when I explained how there was room for everyone in the party, abortionists included. I mean, if we let Richard Nixon speak at the Convention, what's the big problem with someone who kills babies?

—Bill Bennett attacked me on the abortion thing at the Cabinet meeting. I explained that the Republican Party was like a jam session: everyone can have a different style but still play together. He said that wasn't the Republican Party I was talking about, it was the band Asia and that none of its members talk to each other anymore.

Things are going from bad to worse. The other day I was sitting in my office, laying down some scales on the Stratocaster. George got me when we won the election. Bill Bennett walks in, leaves, and comes back with an Ibanez and rips into this incredible Jimmy Page solo. I mean, it really blew me away. I complimented him on his musicianship, and he just smiled and said, "It's all in the guitar." Needless to say, I traded him for it on the spot. Now everything I play sounds worse than before.

The black community still hasn't warmed to the President, even though they have three of the top 10 spots on the Billboard Charts under his administration. Frankly, we're all at wit's end trying to figure out what to do.

Talked to Chuck D. I explained to him that Republicans understand all about being misquoted, and if he scratched our back we'd scratch his. He said he wasn't misquoted at all, and that he truly believes that George Bush is a racist. I told him that he has no brains, because if he did he would have picked on an ethnic group with less power in this country than the Jews.

Called Axl Rose yesterday. I explained to him that if Marlin Fitzwater wasn't around to rewrite everything we say, we'd get the same bad press he does and that maybe he should give Marlin a call.

Bill Bennett came in to the office today and apologized for the thing with the Ibanez. He said that he wanted to make it up to me, and that if I gave him the Ibanez back he'd give me the Yamaha that Jimi Hendrix played at Woodstock. I took it in to Louis Sullivan and asked him to sing while I played the blues, but he said he was too busy for that now. I wonder when the guy is going to wake up and realize that he has even fewer friends around here than I do.

—Marlin Fitzwater came into my office and threw down a sheaf of papers on my desk. Boy was he mad, yelling about Willie Horton and David Duke and how because of me none of his old college professors will talk to him anymore. I told him that if it wasn't for Willie Horton he wouldn't have a job, and that David Duke was the best assurance he had that in two years he wouldn't be lobbying the Senate Agriculture Committee for higher subsidy levels for domestic wheat producers. He said that may be so, but that Axl Rose will be useless to us in '92 until he stops saying stuff about faggots and niggers in his songs. He said that he suggested to him that he change the words to "gay community" and "African-Americans," but Axl kept insisting that that wasn't what he meant and how the new version didn't scan. I told Marlin to be patient and reminded him how long it took to get Ed Meese to stop using those words.

THE KING AND THE GODEFATHER



The King's Last Phone Call
(August 15, 1977)

[The phone rings in Graceland's kitchen.]

—Hullo, this is Elvis Presley speakin'...

—Do ya know who this is? Huh? It's Enrico Gambino from Vegas. Remember me?

—Yessir, yessir ah do.

—Do you remember the last time you was in Vegas? You went to a nice rib joint, the nicest.

—Ah been meanin' ta give ya a call 'bout alla that, sir...

—You ate everything, you DELETED! I had to close the place—know why?

—I got an idea, sir...

—Don't flatter yourself, you fuckin' bloated DELETED! This tab is bigger than both of us. You couldn't pay this tab, Presley.

—Wella now, ah'm sure...

—There was a nice boy working your booth that night, the nicest. Nobody's seen him since and I think you know why.

—Now ah'm sure there's an explanation...

—He was my son. My own fuckin' son. Don't play stupid with me, Presley...

—Ah ain't, sir.

—I'm gonna DELETED you for this. I'm gonna cut you wide open. You hear me, Presley? Your ass is gonna be DELETED.

[At this point, Presley hangs up and dials a number.]

—Hullo, Francis?

—Enrico?

—Elvis, sir, Elvis Presley.

[Pause]

—What is it this time?

—Enrico Gambino. He thinks I ate his boy, Frank...

—Sorry, babe. You're on your own.

[Sinatra hangs up. Presley sobs softly into the receiver.]

I E D S

Rock 'N' Roll

F A B L E

Once upon a time there was a girl named Paula who transferred to a high school for the performing arts to become a big star. Within days of her arrival she went out for cheerleading and began making eyes at Arsenio, the catch of the junior class, while managing to keep her rejection from choir a secret.

At tryouts, cheerleading captain Janet could not believe her luck. Paula's spastic movements were just what she needed to distinguish herself from her older brother Michael, a good dancer, and win this year's talent show on her own merits. Janet convinced the squad that it would be easier for them to learn Paula's moves than to teach her theirs, and the new girl was unanimously named captain. Paula and Arsenio were going steady the very next day.

It's Jamie again. Today I am talking seriously about a serious subject: drugs and rock'n'roll.

Everyone knows that drugs are bad. Some drugs like crack make you have a baby that is little and skinny like it is from Malaysia. Drugs like acid make you see things that disturb you, like your mother having sex with the Pope or Alwyn Rodgers talking to your sister Terry instead of to you.

Everyone also knows that there are a lot of drugs in rock'n'roll. Some people say that "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" is about a picture Julian Lennon made or that the song "Heroin" is a typographical error and was really about Meryl Streep in "Sophie's Choice." Everyone except Terry knows that the songs are really about drugs. That is neither here nor there.

In the perfect world, no one would do drugs. But no one is perfect, even a rock star. While it is good that Lou Reed doesn't do

After learning Paula's secrets, Janet quit cheerleading to work on her solo act. To fill the vacancy, Paula was forced to approach Madonna, who had been kicked off the squad for dating one of the bad boys. Madonna demanded that her special friend Sandra be allowed on the squad too, but Belinda and the other pom-pom girls vetoed the idea. Paula was forced to withdraw the squad from the talent show. Arsenio dumped her the moment he heard.

First prize at the talent show went to Don Henley, a shy but arrogant senior who everyone was sure had already graduated.

Moral: Self-promoting schemes are no substitute for a cold and steady adherence to the shifting tastes of the record-buying public.

drugs anymore, only old people liked his last record. This is because they listened to too much rock when they were younger and think it is still the Velvet Underground and not just a crappy solo album. The same is also true about other people like Keith Richards.

Because of Latin America, there will always be drugs and some people will do them. My idea is that the government should take the drugs they capture and give them to Lou Reed and Keith. They should tell them that it is OK to use them, especially if they are making an album. If they hurt people or do too much drugs after the album is over, the President could take away the drugs. That way, the President would still have a War on Drugs, and the music on the radio wouldn't sound so bad.

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- 4 Mosaic—The Gipsy Kings (Elektra)
- 5 Passion Sources—Various (Real World)
- 6 Welela—Miriam Makeba (PolyGram)
- 7 Mlah—Les Negresses Vertes (Sire)
- 8 Groove Yard—Various (Mango)
- 9 Belize Tropical/Brazil Classics 1 (Sire)
- 10 Estrangiero—Caetano Veloso (Elektra)
- 11 Corruption—Thomas Mapfumo (Mango)
- 12 Legends—Bob Marley (Mango)
- 13 Vini Vini—Kassav (CBS)
- 14 Songs for the Poor Man—Remmy Ongala (Real World)
- 15 Beasts of No Nation—Fela Anikulap-Kuti (Shanachie)
- 16 Dancehall Styles—Various (Profile)
- 17 Heartbeat Drums of Japan—Kodo (Sheffield)
- 18 By The Rivers of Babylon—Puri Gold (Shanachie)
- 19 Forró! Music for Maids and Taxi Drivers—Various (Rounder)
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Heroin in LA from page 36

have to remember that I had friends—good friends—Cass, Jimi, Janis—people I really cared about, man—die! And I kept right on doing it. All of us who were heavyweight addicts had episodes where we would nearly die and go out and take drugs right afterwards. I would wake up from having a seizure from toxic saturation of cocaine from freebasing, and ask for another hit. The next day after I'd had a heroin overdose, I had to go out and try to score some more heroin."

For some, the terrible lure of the smack high and its mythical status in the rock world are just too strong. On the same night that Slash and his pals were jamming at Spice, a woman called Blue Boy—who'd come to LA with a guitar and an itch to rock—shot herself full of dope for the third or tenth time that day and stole another armful of rock'n'roll fantasy. She felt, just for a while, like onlookers would make excuses for her while she was so beautifully stoned, just like for Slash or Errol or Crosby. She was wrong.

Hollywood itself is small—a hilly, four-mile stretch of hotels, two-story wood frame office buildings, homes and strip malls. It lays out like an oasis between the real desert and the dead urban sprawl of LA. By night, it's green and warm and the residential parts are choked with palmettos and fruit trees and grass fed with water stolen from the Colorado River or lakes high in the Sierras. Compared with cold concrete zones back East like New York and Washington, Hollywood is a decaying palm tree paradise, a squalid, crime-ridden neighborhood against the mountains where the rich people live.

Psychically, though, Hollywood is enormous, as though every club and store and hotel had about 48 additional floors underground, inhabited by aged performers and ghosts that have become integral to the American collective unconscious. Heroin's been a permanent fixture there since celebrity decadence first blossomed with the film industry in the 20s. One guitarist who'd washed in on the flood from New York said, "It rocks, man. Every night is a gig night."

The rest of LA—down there across Melrose, under the brown air—is where you go if you're not famous and you need to score dope.

I'd been dropping in and out of this easy underworld of Hollywood clubs for months, quickly getting overwhelmed by the numbers of LA rockers who were forced to go public about their addictions. But there's only so much you can get out of interviews with veteran users who've decided to kick. The only way to drag the bottom of this scene was to stay in the cheap clubs and on the streets, where the young, nameless junkies wear the Bad Boy badge like a tattoo. That's where I met Blue Boy. Here with the wannabes who use smack to get famous—and become the smack casualties no one ever sees.

Blue Boy had been introduced to me at a tiny joint on Cherokee called Boardner's Bar. I had just come from English Acid, a Wednesday-night club down on Santa Monica, where the indestructible Johnny Thunders bashed through a set of overdone R&B tunes, backed by a local crew called The Mimes. Everyone was in English Acid that night to see how Johnny was Johnny just was. He poured his heart into "Personality Crisis" and walked away.

Blue Boy couldn't afford the \$7 to get in to see her hero, because she needed the money for junk. She was a 24-year-old songwriter in the "Joan Armatrading-Lou Reed-Bowie vein," whatever that meant. Two years ago she had left her family in Miami to join the flood tide of musicians washing into the LA basin, to where the music industry lives. She was looking for a



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record deal or some indication of fame. Then everything in her life would be okay.

But in the meantime, everything was fucked up. Blue Boy was a hardcore starvation artist, convinced that her quirky songs would become popular over time. She was a bar waitress and worked phone sex for an LA "976" number to augment money that she got monthly from "someone in Miami who really wanted to see me make it." But no amount of money was really enough. At times her smack habit got so bad that she slept around just to have a place to crash. And why not? All the Bad Boys in town bragged about the chicks who put them up.

Two days later she pushed open the door of my room at the Best Western on Franklin in the middle of the night, strolled in and sat down on the floor underneath a print of Thomas Gainsborough's "Blue Boy." She was wearing a pair of those thin leather Lip Service lace-up pants that flash a two-inch bit of skin from ass to ankles, an oversized shirt and a ratty brocade jacket. She looked burnt, her skin waxy and her cheekbones flashing. She was nervous and gave off an odor of slight alarm.

Blue Boy had been sitting and drinking beer in my room for less than an hour when she broke out a plastic prescription bottle half-full of tablets.

"You got a lot of fucking nerve," I said, stretched out on the carpet amidst a litter of files and RIP magazines. "You're not doing that in here."

"Don't you see what I got here?" she said. "These are 'scripts. Very safe."

"I don't care what it is. I'm throwing you out on your ass."

"Per-co-dan," she said, carefully enunciating the prescription painkiller. "Don't throw me out."

"I don't want you dying in my room."

LIFE IS ABOUT TO BECOME A WHOLE LOT HOTTER

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"You crack me up. I'm going to do it whether you want me to or not. Chickenshit. You don't have to watch."

I did watch. She pulled a manicure kit from her bag and opened it. In it were two small syringes and some scissors, and a tiny crucible that stood on three legs for cooking and dissolving dope. She set up shop on the table and didn't hear anything I had to say after she got her head bent on dissolving three tablets. She shot it quickly, booting it once, then just set her tools down and lay back on the floor again, as though she should avoid chairs and beds. She tried to look at me, but it wasn't working too well and she smiled a mercury, tell-O smile and sat very still. Her eyes focused somewhere in the middle of the room.

About three hours later, I asked her why.

"You don't get it. . . . Nobody wants me to feel this good right now. Being fucked up is all that keeps me doing anything. Otherwise I just fucking hate. You'd all be doing this if you could."

A day later and a mile away, I caught up with my pals from a band called the Outlaws of Excess. They were just walking out of the Billiards Building to pick up beer on a Saturday night. We walked to the liquor store at the corner of Wilton and Hollywood. Forty-ouncers of Schaeffer are only 99 cents there, and my friend Chad had scraped up the change to buy two. The Outlaws of Excess are one of the dozens of bands who rehearse in Western Studios.

Saturdays are open-door jam nights, when many of the bands who haven't bought themselves a gig on the strip run through their sets. Nights when the door is open and the bands aren't writing is when the women pour in—girls in spandex and ripped jeans, girls with dyed hair and tattoos, girls who buy the beer and who

know by heart the words to every song by their favorite struggling bands. I asked the band Juicy Miss Lucy down the hall what they did for money and they said some girl they used to fuck comes to their house one day a month and pays the rent for them.

The Outlaws were auditioning a new drummer who'd managed to arrange his kit in the tiny 10 X 20 space that holds the Marshalls and the Peavey PA owned by Brad, the lead guitar player—as well as almost all the clothes, magazines, blankets and guitars they brought with them from Oregon. Almost everyone lives in the studio, including girlfriends, roadies and techs. At night, when rehearsal is over, they lay out the bedrolls in tight formation and crash.

"Half of Hollywood is hooked on dope right now," says the wife of one well-known LA rocker. "And the other half are pissed off about it."

There are no showers, no toilet, no running water, no refrigerator and of course no stove on their floor. The studios are just live-in garages, complete with oil'n'jiz stains and a floor that bounces with the kick-drum. Everything besides sleeping and jamming has to be done out. The walls are sound-proofed by thick sheets of fiberglass insulation covered with thin cotton fabric, which doesn't work at all and makes the rooms god-awful hot. The amps are piled with empty cans of

Meisterbrau and everything is covered in a layer of ash from cheap cigarettes. The windows are covered with plexiglass the color of piss. This is a building where loads of famous bands first acquired their habits.

"Picture this room all dark and there's a guy laying in the middle of the floor with his works," says Kez, the drummer for Gung Ho!, a band that works on the third floor. "That's what happens with smack. They think it's gonna make them like Guns N' Roses, man. But those guys that are strung out are that close to homelessness. I see them on the street. I've been offered so many drugs out here, man, it's the sleaziest scene in the world. And you're sitting in the worst of it right now."

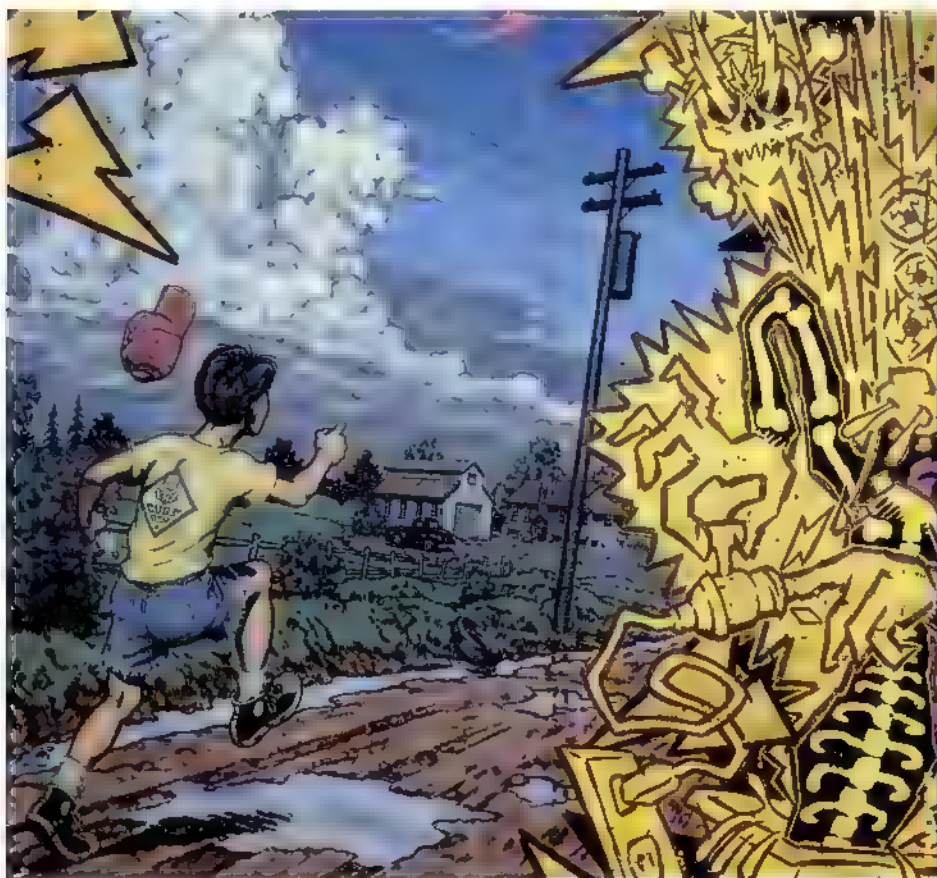
The Outlaws, for their part, say they have neither the desire nor the money to get into smack. But most everyone knows the few bands in the building who do slam. Those who use and those who don't are influenced by the same people, the utter failures and the undeniable success of some bands who came up and out of this place—and buildings just like it behind the Guitar Center on Sunset or in the area of the Musician's Institute.

Inexpensive heroin makes less harmful drugs like pot and psychedelics both hard to find and expensive.

"It bums me out," says one kid in the Billiards. "If it's so cheap, it makes it hard to get good pot."

"The guy who sweeps up the building told me he quit because he was fuckin' sick of sweeping up people's needles all over the place," says Kez.

"There's some guys in this building who are way into it," agrees Jeff, the drummer for Lord Metal. "They got to load up before they go onstage n' shit. All those bands might get signed, even. I understand that one of them is close. But so what? They'll get signed to majors and then a few months later they'll die."



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"A lot of new bands feel that even if they're not doing it, they need to indicate that they are, because that's how you grab fans," says Bob Timmins, a drug recovery expert who has helped squash some of the most famous addictions in the history of rock'n'roll.

"I was out with a headliner band a few months ago who had an opening band," says Bob. "There is no one in that opening band whom I would label an addict or anything—but in their opening for this headliner band, they needed to have a lot of dialogue about partyin'—that they were going to go out and get rotted after the show that night, et cetera. And my sense of it is that they believe that's what they've got to tell their fans. I think a lot of their role models—you know, whether it's Guns N'Roses or Mötley Crüe—that's what they did, so . . ."

An unsettling wave of cleanster stories has swamped the media, making getting clean almost as important, in terms of image and creativity, as getting fucked up was in the first place. Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Hollywood have ballooned to unprecedented numbers, and have become boisterous, sometimes angry, star-studded events.

Timmins knows everything about Bad Boys. Fourteen years off heroin himself, he's an ex-con who spent much of his youth grinding around on a Harley, colors on his back, committing a drawn-out series of robberies to pay for his junk habit. After his last stay in jail about 15 years ago, Bob went into a recovery program and realized that he had something to give back to the outlaw community. He started helping people commit to recovery as a way to keep himself clean. He found that self-destructive rock'n'roll outlaws who thought everyone else was full of shit just couldn't get past Bob's badass career. They ran out of defenses when he confronted them. Down the line, his concern became a career.

"There are just so many myths within it," says Timmins. "If you look at alcoholism and chemical dependency as being a disease of denial, what you always hear is, 'I'm different: I know how to manage and control my drug use.'"

Late one Sunday night, two years ago, Bob got a phone call from his close friend, blues legend Paul Butterfield. "Paul felt like he was able to control his using. He had gone out on the streets and got a new connection, got a new bag of heroin. Called me up before he used, told me that he had just got back from New York, where HBO had done a tribute to him, and that he really wanted to be clean. And that he had copped a bag in New York."

The next morning, Timmins sat in Paul's quiet LA home, doing a lot of thinking about the difference between an addict's self-image and his reality. Butterfield was lying in front of him, dead. He'd overdosed after they'd spoken only hours before. Bob sat there for three hours while the police went about the cold procedure of tagging another famous junkie.

"I remember . . . me saying to him on the phone as he was loading—and I know you can't talk to somebody as they're loading, they don't even remember your talk—I said, 'Paul, are you holding?' And he said, 'No, man, I did the last of it when I got back today.' So he lied to me.

"I know Paul, and I know that that was not his intention . . . And what happened was that he overdosed . . . on this new guy's stuff he just didn't know."

No drug counselor has been embraced by the rock world like Bob Timmins. Timmins has no official title, does not advertise, and doesn't really know how to



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characterize his job if you ask him what he does for a living. Working with a circle of specialized drug treatment centers, Bob has aided the recoveries of Steve Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith, Vince Neil and Nikki Sixx of Mötley Crüe, members of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Steve Jones and many others whose struggles with hard drugs were never made public.

"A band would almost rather be known for falling off the stage than for being in recovery, in terms of PR," says Bob. "When they get into recovery, then it's hard for them to keep the party image and to be straight at the same time. And it's also hard for a lot of them because they didn't out-front admit that they got loaded in the first place—and it used to be hard for a lot of them to even admit that they were going to meetings or that they were in recovery."

"One of the ways that the part of me that wants to get fucked up toys with me is with that question," Errol says. "How can you stand up there and be Mr. Clean, and still be congruous with the theme of [his band]? This band is all about decadence and all about freedom of choice and doing what you want to do. If you're a guy and you want to fuck another guy, that's alright. There's no moral situation.

"And the fact of the matter is, that they're not necessarily mutually exclusive. Being clean doesn't then mean that you are not these decadent things. Because I'm still the sick fuck that I am whether I'm on drugs or not. That's a real dinosaur idea—it's very fuckin' Keith Richards, or whatever fucking rock'n'roll dinosaurs I can't stomach like Keith Richards . . . if you want to be a Bad Boy that a girl would be ashamed to bring home to meet Mom and Dad, that's one of the ways you can be THAT kind of Bad Boy.

Continued on page 97

FORWARD IN ALL DIRECTIONS

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AIDS from page 70

could feed their own people, but without the profits for those in control. AIDS, thus, can become a smokescreen to cover a multitude of sins. If a country's health woes can be attributed to AIDS, the structure of power and locus of wealth will remain unaltered.

How much good is being blunted by using international monies for HIV research in Africa, when the same monies could be used for toilets and land reclamation and water purification and more education of local farmers? There is no dialogue and no political or scientific debate on this question.

Once the disease and its geography are set out by the major players, no turf can be yielded back. Africa could become a permanent "AIDS subsidiary" of a huge worldwide health industry—an "AIDS multinational."

**In the Third World, dire
AIDS predictions have
cemented the idea of a
global plague that is
going to kill us all.**

After talking with Ugandan sources, I had several conversations with an American biologist at a large Southwestern university. He had interesting points to make about the barriers to developing a vaccine against HIV. At one point, he became very serious and said, "You know, don't you, that you can't mention my name."

I asked him why.

"Well," he said, "there could be problems."

"Losing grant money?"

"Sure."

"Losing a job?"

"It's possible."

All because he was criticizing the major official effort in finding a workable AIDS vaccine.

"There's supposed to be open inquiry in your field," I said.

He laughed. "It isn't quite that way."

He had brought up Jeremy Rifkin's name during the conversation. Now he said, "It's also because I mentioned Rifkin. I think it's good there's a person like that who watchdogs abuses in genetic engineering. But if it came out that I had a favorable opinion about him, I could definitely be in trouble."

"It sounds like PR has taken over your field."

"I know," he said.

It was not an unusual chat.

A biologist at UCLA, for instance, said, "You know, there are those of us who don't want to work on AIDS. We see how [political] the research situation is, so we stand back and let others get embroiled. Medical faddism isn't anything new. Early in this century, the Swedish made great progress on polio research, but they were ignored because the Americans were off on another tack." The implication was that HIV might not be the cause of AIDS.

There was also the New York researcher, Joseph Sonnabend, who, with rage and disappointment, recounted an anecdote of the AIDS establishment:

"I was at a press conference in New York. It was in 1984, just after Robert Gallo announced he had discovered the AIDS virus. People had come from Washington to brief reporters, and they put slides on a screen and talked about the composition of HIV. But as they showed the earlier French version of HIV and then the later American, I saw—and so could anybody else with a little background—that the two viral specimens were perfectly alike. There was absolutely no difference. That was impossible. There's always a little variance.

"I felt sick. I walked outside in the hall and an American, a Nobel prize winner, was standing there. I said to him, 'This is terrible. Somebody stole the French sample they sent to America. We didn't find one on our own. It's the same sample. Somebody has to go back in there and tell the reporters.' This man looked at me and said, 'Please. Don't do it. Let it alone. Let us work it out ourselves.' He was giving me the elitist runaround. 'Let those of us who are specialists take care of our own filthy laundry.' And of course, no one ever really did take care of it."

In most of my off-the-record talks with researchers, whether they were unhappy about the AIDS establishment itself or were grousing at one another, they showed almost no desire to fix what was wrong—no desire to bring matters out into the open.

Obviously, when scientists acquiesce to the message that certain basic assumptions are not to be challenged, research itself, without enough checks, slips directly into the industrial pipeline, and on to the public.

Add a few familiar items—incompetence, greed, a natural desire for job security, intolerance for divergent thought—a short list of the worst corporate virtues—and you have a situation where an entire aspect of the medical establishment can slip off the rails—can become a business. We have to consider seriously that this is what is happening the case of AIDS.

"All the people that I hang out with now are strip-tease dancers, whores, gamblers, hoodlums, fighters—all those things. We all hang out together and we're all drug addicts, but we're just not on drugs anymore. But we're still these bad, rule-breaking types."

Tuesday morning, 3:30 AM. Blue Boy and I leave the rock'n'roll Denny's on Sunset and she says she wants to drive my rented Nissan hot rod. I toss her the keys while, as usual, I pay the check. Then I dash through the door in a panic, thinking she might try to steal the damn thing. We cruise around Hollywood checking out what's left on the streets from the day before: the hair farmers stumbling out of the clubs, the homeless crawling into the storefronts for shelter, the bikers drag racing with shadows down Hollywood Boulevard. A young rocker with a violent, video-fed dream would give his left nut to burn this Babylon down and say he did.

Blue Boy wheels up and down the avenues in the center of Hollywood, pointing out places where she used to cop, peering across my shoulder into darkened drives. Guided by her celebrity-death fixation, she drives up toward the Strip on Sunset pointing out dozens of spots where legends have died.

"Chateau Marmont," she coos absently. Comedy phenomenon John Belushi died there in a hotel bungalow on March 5, 1982, of a speedball overdose.

She looks one step closer to death. Her eyes bulge out over black hollows where her eyelids and her cheeks used to be—a bit vampiric, as though her skin were fake. She has a huge bruise on her right wrist that wasn't there a couple days ago. When she smiles at me, it's sort of animated. We talk, but Blue often loses the thread of the conversation.

"I used to cop right here a long time ago. On the street. I want to see—but that shit was just so fucking dangerous—I mean, I'm not out to kill myself, I guess. You heard about that Black Tar they got hold of this summer up around San Francisco?"

I had. Some dealer had imported a freak batch of Mexican smack that was practically uncut and then dealt it right off that way, almost pure. Street dope is usually between 10 and 20 percent pure, depending on the connection. Users who shot their regular dose went right off the edge of the world on this 95 percent dope—about 50 people overdosed before word got around.

Twenty minutes later we're parked behind a trio of palms about 30 yards from Will Rogers Beach, out where Sunset dead-ends at the Pacific. Blue Boy scrambles down the bank with her guitar. After a few minutes I plunk down next to her and zip up my jacket against the chill and she plays some of her songs. Her voice is wavering, edgy, on the verge of going from strong to terrible, sort of an early Marianne Faithfull.

Looking at her, it is clear that she is coming apart—or worse, that she could go on like this forever. Heroin is not a debilitating drug that leaves you in a coma every time you fix it or pull it up your nose. Small doses don't hit much harder than a couple of Darvons, Valiums or any other opiate-based painkillers your mother gets in bulk from the pharmacy.

"It'd sound better through an amp," she says, stopping.

"You sound fine," I say. "I want you to make me a tape."

After a few minutes she says, "I'll make you a tape right now. Go get your machine."

I clamber up to the car, half thinking I'd humor her and half that I might just be making an incredible document, like the Campfire Tapes that Michelle Shocked

made in Texas on a Walkman. You never know.

"Here's what I'm gonna do," she says, rubbing her eyes. The waves are pounding. "I'm gonna pop the rest of this bag and I'll sing my little heart out."

"Do it without."

"I don't want to. I don't think I can."

"You just did a minute ago."

"Yeah, but that was just fuckin' around. I want to do it right. Here, I'll cut you a little bit. Just toot it."

I look at the foil she pulls out. I hear myself thinking: 'It's just a painkiller.' I know it's true and it makes my head hurt and makes me pissed off.

"Don't ever do that to me again," I say, turning down her offer.

"Don't you either," she says.

The waves thunder under the sand. I say, "That shit is killing you."

"I'm sitting right here playing, aren't I? I feel okay, don't I? I look okay, don't I? Am I calling the doctor, over here?"

"Exactly. So sing."

"What the fuck do you know about junk? You ain't never even tried it, you lousy hippie moralist. Shit..."

I try to explain, but I blew it. The paranoia kicks in hard and she's instantly convinced herself that I am the enemy, just like everyone else. Her fear of losing or running out of dope lets her see straight through to the bottom of my heart. I want that dope away from me.

That's as far as things go, for a while. Then she climbs the little bluff and sits on the car. The waves are still black when we leave, and by the time I drop her and her guitar off at a convenience store on Melrose, it's after 6:00 AM. The sun, though, is far away. It comes up on the other side of the continent. It only goes down over here.



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Were Noriega and King Olav V Partners
in an International Herring and
Creamer Cartel? Judge for Yourself.

You've probably read, and may even have memorized, my article describing the ordeal I endured in order to become SPIN's Reporter at Large. Since then I have been in constant action, tracking The Great Stories across the globe, beneath the sea and in some fine restaurants. Of course this leaves little time for writing, but no price is too high to repay the trust SPIN has placed in me.

Yes, the job is challenging. But luckily we Reporters at Large are unlike other mortals. We're gifted with the ability to interpret subtleties far too keen for the ordinary eye. Why, we can read the course of nations in flattened mouse poo on the interstate. We hear the future in the whine of shortwave static, or in the sighing of the willows. We divine eternal verities from one glance into tea leaves, bath rings, the storm-driven clouds.

For we are the Metajournalists. And as Old Federico told me years ago, *stories are where you find them.*

December 22, 1989, 2:34 AM. The red phone burrs suddenly on the nightstand anent my lonely Beverly Hills bachelor's bed. Reflexes instantly in hyperdrive, I seize the receiver midway through that first ring. No point in waking the sheep, they're sleeping the sleep of the exhausted.

"Priority Zero," crackles a familiar, faraway voice, the voice called "Bob," cover name for our Number One back at SPIN Central. I murmur the countersign and "Bob" (who frequently writes his name backwards for security reasons) continues over the scrambler. The scrambler hums as he speaks. "The Noriega business is hot. Do your stuff. First plane out in the morning."

But a Reporter at Large on Priority Zero doesn't wait for morning. The march of events waits for no man, and very few women. Each second is more precious than the next. So I leap up, shaving as I pack, showering as I dress. There will be time aplenty in the taxi to dry myself, to stanch the blood from those tiny razor nicks.

3:26 AM. The taxi rattles through the predawn streets. I begin my intense mental preparation for Panama. My thinking switches to Spanish, one of the 30 or 40 identifiable languages at my command. I fondle a Panama-shaped piece of cloth and concentrate on Roberto Duran, international sea lanes, Ruben Blades. Quietly I recite the palindromic mantra, "A man, a plan, a canal—Panama!" I say it forwards and backwards, and vice versa, to forge the SPIN mind-link with my target country.

But from the back of my mind comes a warning signal that something isn't quite

right—a still, small voice that whispers, "Something isn't quite right."

Suddenly I understand what "Bob" was hinting at when he so subtly mispronounced the name "Noriega." It sounded almost like "NorUega," the Spanish name for Norway! Even with the scrambler, one can never be too secure. Not in a world bristling with PDF goons, Druze militiamen and Pia Zadora fans.

Quickly I make new plans. I order my driver to abort the trip to the PanaMair terminal and rush me to NorWair instead. With luck I can still make the 5:15 nonstop to Oslo. . . .

7:17 AM. I look around the cheery first class cabin of NorWair's giant Sven-909 Hugebody. Half of the occupants are smiling blond Norsemen heading home. The other half arouse my interest: ferret-eyed, bronze-faced, Spanish-speaking men in camouflage uniforms who balance huge cellophane sacks of—is that Cremora?—on their laps. They attract my attention by requesting *banana* with their breakfast cereal. *My guess is that they are Central Americans!*

I turn and gaze into the bright Canadian stratosphere to begin my intense mental preparation for Norway. Having no Norway-shaped pieces of cloth to fondle, I turn the Panama-shaped cloth upside down and backwards and . . . what's this? It feels just like Norway! To double-check, I close my eyes and visualize a world map.

Sure enough, both countries have virtually the same shape, especially at low tide. Norway, larger, dangling from the Arctic Circle like a condom bloated with aquavit . . . Panama, straining towards the Equator like a throbbing whizzer with Colombia on its mind. Coincidence? The naive may think so!

I grip the cloth and concentrate on Edward Grieg, tundras, Hedda Gabler in a cable-stitched crew neck sweater of coarse Lapp Dacron with an attractive rust-and-burnt-sienna herringbone pattern. *Merge with the people, become the people*, Old Federico used to tell me. His words still ring in my ears.

5:14 PM. I have become Norwegian. Every thought, every instinct is that of a Norwegian man my age. I am also three inches taller, my hair noticeably blonder. The SPIN mind-link is truly astounding. But it isn't perfect: I have had to insert sky-blue contact lenses, with a matching hearing aid. However, my Norwegian is fluent and colorful. The stewardess called Helga has pointedly mentioned her two-day lay-over in Oslo. She has offered to show me something she calls her "puppies."

But no time for Helga—there's work to be done! Soon we land in Oslo, so I review the evidence deduced from patterns of air turbulence—truths sung to me by angels. Meta-clues that convince me it's time to blow the lid off the most

sinister cover-up in recent times.

History has obviously chosen me to reveal the facts about King Olav V. Check this: He has ruled since 1957 in a democratic, just and generous way. His subjects, the Parliament and even the Norwegian media openly admire and adore him.

But who knows what they're thinking in those quiet moments just before sleep, what they whisper in the privacy of their sleds, what complaints they exchange behind the moose pens?

Has it never occurred to you that Norway—with its 100-percent literacy, its cleanliness, prosperity, public health, peacefulness and lack of racial strife—is just a little too perfect?

Let's wake up, Planet Earth, and take a harder look at Olav V! He's consorted with a known queen. He has never been to Camp David. He's done nothing to rectify that inflammatory slur-word, "Fjord." Only a provocateur would disfigure the great American name "Ford" with an unpronounceable "j"!

Need more proof? Just ask yourself these simple questions:

—Why is herring suddenly so popular in Panama?

—How come the Norwegian Parliament refuses to outlaw public maraca playing?

—Why did no Norwegian troops fight alongside our boys in Panama?

—What accounts for the Norwegians' craving for papaya, and the Panamanian lust for caribou cheese?

Well? The weak-kneed may doubt, but not this reporter! Not with what I see aboard this airplane—ironclad proof of a Noriega-Olav V plot for herring laundering, aquavit trafficking, maybe even elk pelts . . . in exchange for *you-know-what!*

5:18 PM. I am not at all concerned that the passengers are staring at me. It's only because I tend to speak aloud as I write. You know—to get the phrasing right.

As soon as we land, I plan immediate action. Once I'm in Olav's "Little Panama," where the women are fast with a kiss and the men are faster with a knife, I'll begin the popular uprising against the evil King Olav V, the Peer Gynt of Power Politics, the Viking of Viciousness. . . .

9:35 PM. Well, what if the cockpit crew *did* radio ahead to Oslo? What if those Norwegian Police asked all those embarrassing questions, and confiscated my blue contact lenses? That only proves I've struck a nerve! What if Olav's goons continue unhampered for the moment, and the authorities scorn me? At least now the deeper, wider story is on the public record, thanks to SPIN Metajournalism.

As Old Federico often said, *the truth will out—sort of.*

His words still ring in my ears. ☺

Metajournalism by Dean Christopher

**“He works as hard as he plays.
And he drinks Johnnie Walker.”**



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